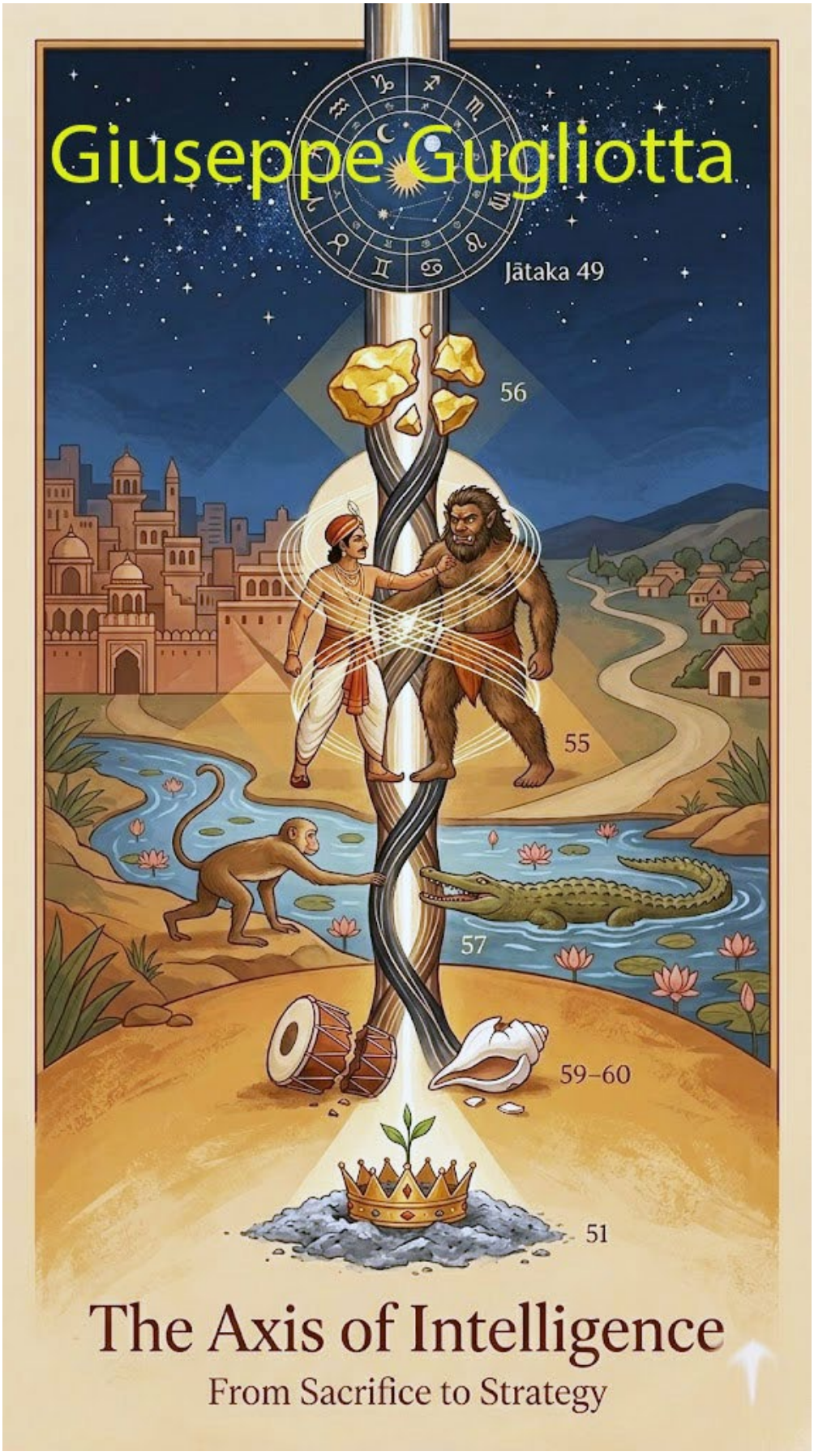
Jātaka 49-60 "The Axis of Intelligence: From Sacrifice to Strategy"

Analysis of the Jātaka 49–60 between Twin Virtues and Survival in Contemporary Culture



Jātaka 49-60

Analyzing the Jatakas from 49 to 60 means entering the section of the Cūḷa-nipāta (the second book of the Canon) where popular wisdom, royal ethics and strategic intelligence merge into tales of extraordinary modernity.

Three main axes are identified below that converge in a single focus: the transformation of brute force into strategic intelligence (Māyā) and violence into virtue. The three main axes are:

1. The Rejection of Sacrifice/Violence (Jātaka 50, 51): The ethics that replaces bloody ritual and war.

2. Fear as an Instrument of Domination (Jātaka 55, 57, 58): The hero who wins not by killing, but by using courage or cunning against physical terror.

3. Contextual Intelligence (Jātaka 49, 53, 54, 56, 59, 60) : The ability to read signs (astrology, chemistry, botany, economics, acoustics) in order to survive in a world of deception.

These three axes converge in Jātaka 51 (Ahāsīlava), which serves as a summa: a pacifist king is buried alive (maximum violence), but survives thanks to his intelligence (mediation between jackals and orcs) and regains the throne without ever betraying his twin virtue: strength and meekness.

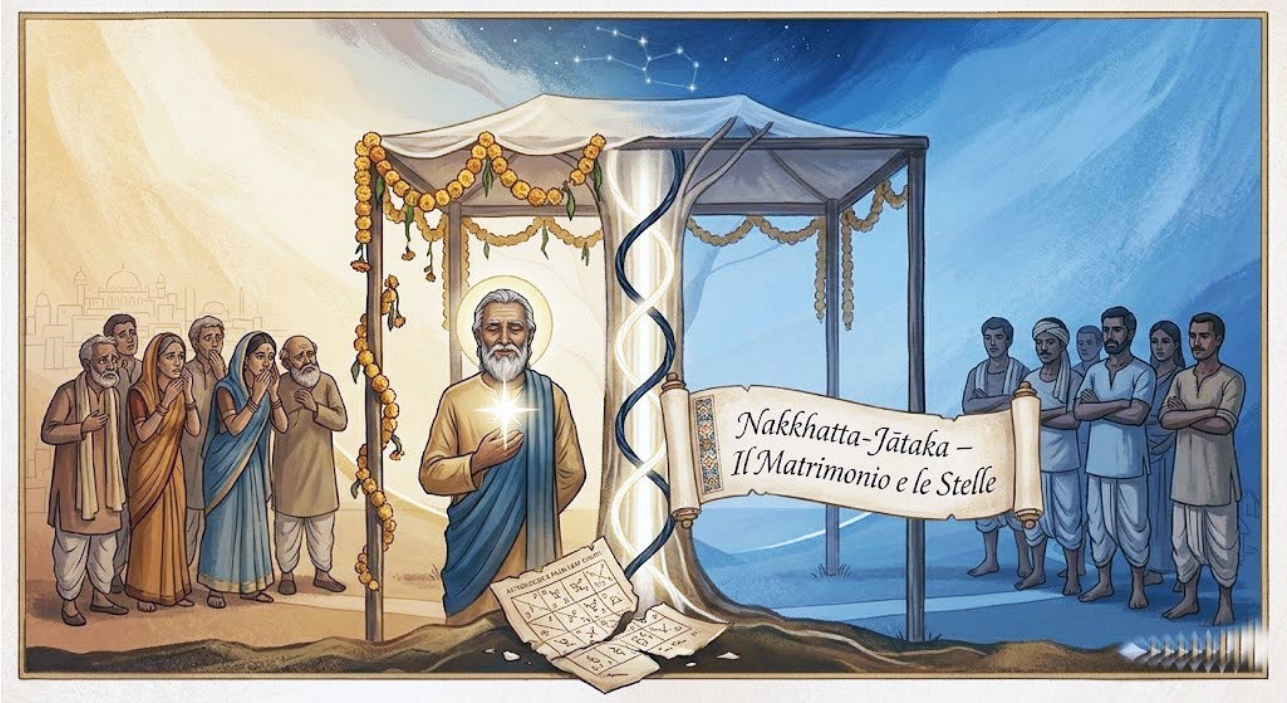
Ladder for Levels and Scenes (Twin Ascending Values)

The structure follows an ascending spiral motion, where each level twins two seemingly opposite values, culminating in the perfect synthesis of Jātaka 51.

Level 1: The Veil of Truth (Twin: Appearance vs Reality)

These Jatakas open the cycle by dismantling social and natural illusions. Heroism here is passive: knowing how not to fall into deception.

Scene 49 (Nakkhatta): Marriage and the Stars.



An astrologer prevents a marriage for ritual reasons. Human "wisdom" (or self-interest) veils the reality of love. Intelligence here is to decode cultural signs so as not to be a victim of them.

Story of the first Jātaka of the cycle as the opening of the essay The Axis of Intelligence. The narrative is divided into chapters that alternate the thread of the story with a commentary that reveals its twin structure and the link with contemporaneity.

Video post blogger

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/nakkhatta-jataka-49-il-matrimonio-e-le.html

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/nakkhatta-jataka-49-wedding-and-stars.html

https://youtu.be/ppk1DkgxBUw

Chapter 49 – NAKKHATTA-JĀTAKA

Marriage and the Stars

Introduction – The First Deception

Every cycle of stories needs a threshold. In the Jātakas from 49 to 60, this threshold is a marriage that is not celebrated, a feast prepared in vain, a star that becomes an excuse. We are faced with a very ancient and very modern mechanism: the use of knowledge (astrological, ritual, technical) to mask personal interest. Jātaka 49 opens the level that we will call The Veil of Truth, where the twin Appearance vs Reality is staged in an exemplary way.

The image represents an exceptionally faithful and evocative visual translation of the introduction. Each element described has been precisely integrated into the composition:

1. The Concept of Threshold

The narrative core is perfectly captured. The composition is divided vertically by a decorated architectural portal that acts as a physical and symbolic threshold. This structure not only separates the two rooms but also creates a clear frame for the thematic contrast.

2. Left side: festive warmth

This half strictly adheres to the description:

Environment and Climate: It is a vibrant scene of a "decorated courtyard". The lighting is dominated by a warm "golden light", coming from torches and oil lamps, which is reflected on the costumes and decorations. The atmosphere is "festive".

Key Details: The "wedding canopy" (mandap) is central, with red and gold draperies. The bright orange "marigolds" are clearly visible everywhere, hanging from the arches and adorning the space.

Characters: The crowd of "city people" is present, dressed in traditional Indian clothes (sarees and kurtas). Their expressions, either inward or toward the ceremony, convey a sense of anticipation and a shadow of "anxiety" or solemnity as they observe the rituals.

3. Right Side: Cold Astrological Mystery

The contrast is immediate and total:

The Ascetic: A "solitary ascetic" (Sadhu) with long tousled hair and beard sits in meditation under the roots of a large tree. His figure is isolated, monochromatic and austere.

Environment and Climate: Space is dark and nocturnal. The light is cold, a dusty "gray-blue" that creates an atmosphere of mystery and isolation. The tree, with its intricate roots and bare branches, accentuates the sense of abandonment and connection with the earth.

The Sky: The crucial detail of the night sky is rendered perfectly. Two main stars are clearly visible: one shines with an "unnatural" and intense brightness (the largest star), while the other is much smaller and "dim". This visual detail directly interprets the "astrologer's deception" or the omen that the ascetic is observing.

4. Composition and Style

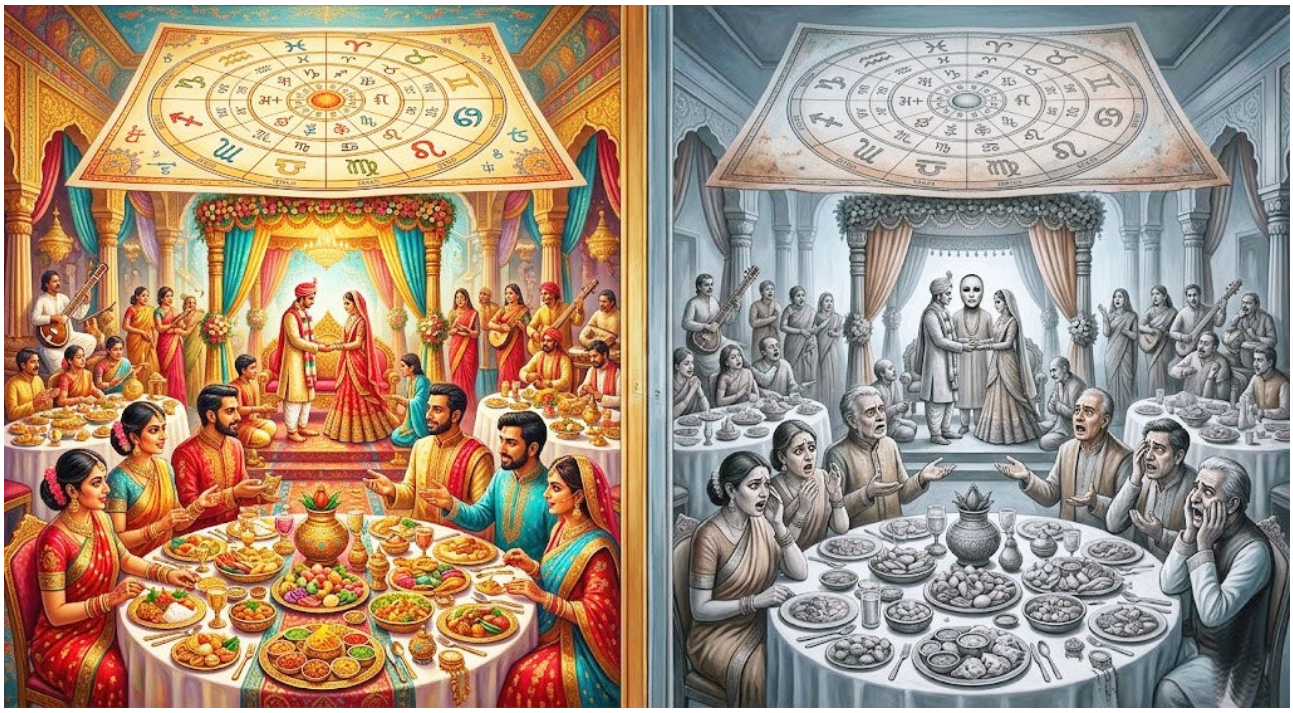
Division and Tension: The composition is sharply divided, creating the required "subtle tension." The architectural arch is not only a division, but a boundary between two states of being, between the social and ritual world and the spiritual and mysterious one.

Lighting: The contrast between golden warmth and cool blue-gray is the emotional engine of the image.

Pictorial Style: The image has a distinctive "pictorial" quality. The texture of the ascetic's skin, the brushstrokes on the leaves and draperies, and the smoky atmosphere of the light are reminiscent of a traditional work of art, not a photograph.

Conclusion

The image does not limit itself to listing the elements, but captures the narrative essence of the dualism described: the impending feast and the mystery of the astrological omen that threatens it. The atmosphere, lighting and composition work in unison to tell the story of a moment of suspension on the threshold of time and destiny.



Heroism, here, is not yet active: it is the ability not to fall into deception, to recognize that wisdom can become a trap when it is separated from ethical intention. In this sense, Jātaka 49 is not only a moral fable, but a key to understanding the entire corpus that follows.

The image captures the narrative and visual essence of the dichotomy between appearance and reality.

Diptych structure: The image is clearly divided into two distinct halves, creating a direct comparison.

Left Side (Appearance - Sumptuous Party):

Scenes: It depicts a lavish and festive Indian wedding party. All the elements are present: the guests in elaborate clothes, tables loaded with elaborate food, musicians and the central couple.

Astrological Chart: A large astrological chart with zodiac symbols floats above the scene. It's integrated well and looks like an important element.

Style and Colors: The colors are "vibrant" and rich. The light is warm, golden, and every detail is saturated and cheerful, conveying a sense of celebration.

Right Side (Reality - The Deception):

Exact Scene Match: The composition is an exact mirror copy of the scene on the left. The guests are in the same positions, the tables are arranged in the same way, as are the musicians. This is crucial for the effectiveness of the comparison.

The Face of the "Empty Mask": This is the central point. At the center of the scene, where on the left there is the couple celebrating, on the right the figures seem to have obscured faces, devoid of features, almost like masks. Above all, the focus is on the faces of the guests.

Guest Expressions: While on the left the guests are smiling and festive, on the right their expressions have changed drastically. They are "turned to confusion" and, in some cases, to terror and shock. You see people with their hands over their mouths, wide eyes, gestures of desperation and bewilderment.

Style and Colors: The transition to "silent" colors is perfectly rendered. The scene is almost monochromatic, a faded gray or sepia, devoid of any warmth, which gives the whole composition a feeling of coldness and fine illusion.

General Comment

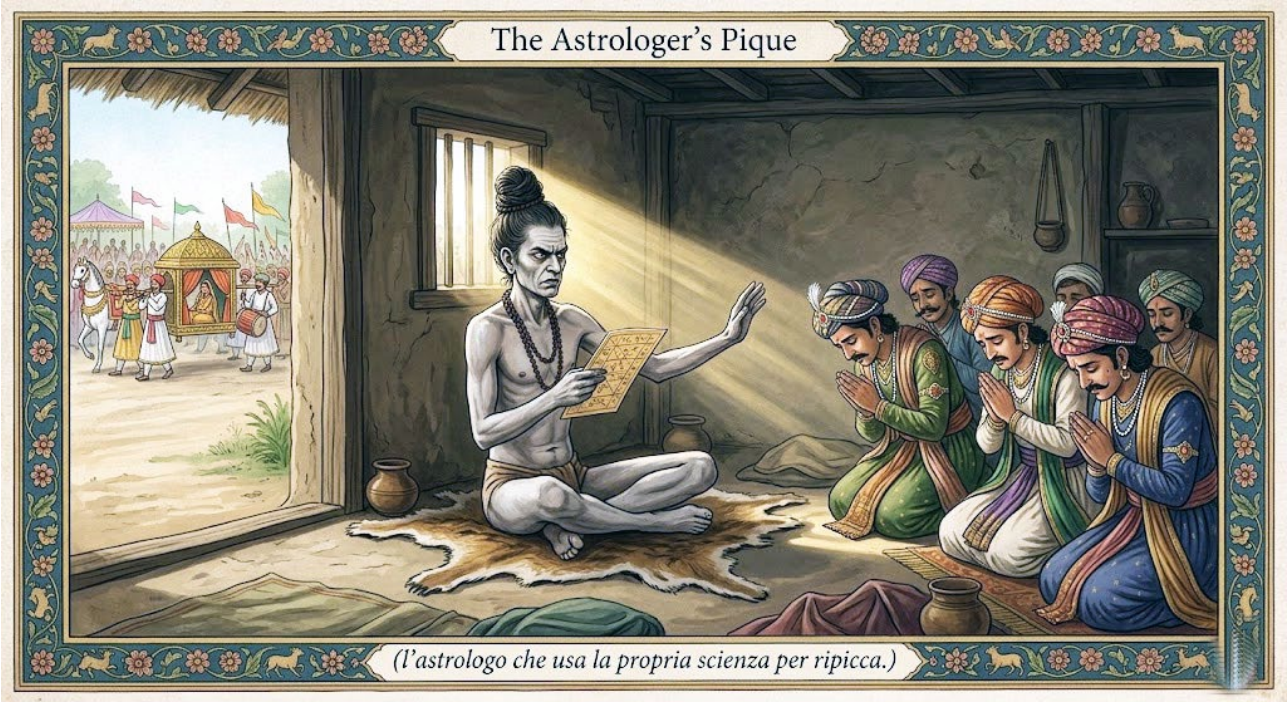
This image is a powerful and evocative interpretation of the theme of the dichotomy between ritual and intentions.

The use of the diptych to separate dream from reality maximizes visual impact. The contrast between the saturated and golden colors of the party and the cool, desaturated tone of the disillusionment creates an almost tactile experience for the viewer.

The most successful aspect is the fidelity of the mirror composition: the fact that every single object and character is in the same position in both scenes makes the change in crucial details even more disconcerting. The "empty mask" in the center perfectly symbolizes the void of meaning or the deceptive intention that hides behind a seemingly rich ritual. The expressions of the guests, transformed from joy to horror, are a final touch that captures the exact moment when the truth is revealed, revealing "the intentions hidden beneath the surface".

In summary, the image does not limit itself to illustrating the prompt, but amplifies its meaning through an impeccable artistic composition and a chromatic choice full of symbolism, accurately interpreting the concept of "Reality vs Appearance".

Chapter 1 – The Promise and the Shadow of the Astrologer



In the time of King Brahmadatta, two families of equal rank in Benares formed an alliance. The young spouses had already been chosen: a city girl, betrothed to a young man from the countryside. The date of the wedding had been set by mutual agreement, well in advance. The city relatives had already set the tables, invited friends, prepared the garlands.

But at a certain point, one of the elders of the town's family thought, "We've forgotten something important. We must consult the family ascetic. It is he who knows the signs of the sky, the motion of the stars, the favorable days. We cannot celebrate without his blessing."

So, when the day was appointed, they went to him. The ascetic – a nudist, an ājīvaka – listened to the request with a smile that did not bode well. Inside himself, however, he boiled.

"They didn't ask me anything at first. They chose the date themselves, as if I were air. Now they come to ask me for permission, just for formalities. They want my approval without my advice. Very well," he thought, "I will make them repent of this lightness."

In a calm voice, the ascetic replied: "The day you have chosen is not favorable. The stars are against it. If you celebrate on that date, misfortune will befall your home."

The citizens turned pale. Trust in the ascetic and fear of fate pushed them to desist. They sent word to the country family: "Let's postpone. Heaven is not propitious."

Image Analysis and Commentary: "The Astrologer's Pique"

1. Respect for the Subject and the Setting:

We are inside a simple hermitage (hermitage) with mud walls and wooden beams. The protagonist, the ascetic, is depicted "naked" (wearing a simple loincloth), with a thin body and his hair tied up (jata-matted hair), sitting on a deerskin. The central object, the "palm-leaf astrological chart", is clearly visible in his hands. The "richly clothed citizens" are also present, bowed respectfully.

2. Interpretation of Narrative Tension:

"The astrologer who uses his science out of spite". Visually, this is rendered through expression and gestures. The ascetic's eyes are not "narrow" in the sense of slits, but they are intense and stare at the chart with a stern and gloomy expression. His right hand does not make a simple gesture of refusal, but an assertive and powerful gesture, almost as if he were pronouncing a negative and final verdict. The tension is evident in the contrast between the humble supplication of the citizens (with folded hands) and the cold rigidity of the ascetic.

3. Composition and Key Details:

A crucial element of the narrative is the "wedding procession waiting outside". The image uses the open door to clearly show the procession with the golden palanquin, the horse and the crowd. This detail perfectly contextualizes the urgency of the citizens and the "spite" of the astrologer who, by delaying or denying the response, is blocking the marriage. The procession is not only "slightly visible", but is a secondary focal point that explains the primary action.

4. Lighting and Dramatic Atmosphere:

Lighting is one of the strengths of the image. The "sunbeam" (shaft of sunlight) strikes the ascetic and, above all, the astrological chart he holds in his hand. This not only "dramatically" enlightens him, but symbolically highlights his knowledge and power. On the contrary, the citizens are more in the shadows, symbolizing their ignorance and dependence on the response of the wise. The atmosphere is serious, tense and full of meaning.

5. Style and Tones:

The composition, stylized perspective and richness of detail are reminiscent of Mughal or Rajput miniatures. The "earth tones" dominate the hermitage (clay, wood, ochre), creating an authentic and warm atmosphere, while the citizens introduce more vibrant color accents (green, red, blue), emphasizing their earthly richness in contrast to the spiritual poverty of the ascetic. The elaborate decorative frame adds an extra layer of philological authenticity to the miniature's style.

Conclusion:

All the key elements (the ascetic, the deerskin, the chart, the citizens, the procession, the lighting) work together to tell the story of a sage who uses his knowledge not to bless, but to exert power and spite, blocking a significant social event.

Analysis – The power of specialist knowledge

In this first act, the Jātaka stages a conflict between two forms of authority: that of the human pact (the given word) and that of initiatory knowledge (astrology). The ascetic does not act out of love for heavenly truth, but out of personal resentment. His knowledge becomes an instrument of revenge, and the city family, even without knowing it, becomes an accomplice in an act of sabotage disguised as devotion.

Contemporary culture offers countless variations on this theme. How many times have we seen an expert – doctor, consultant, columnist – use his expertise to punish those who did not listen to him in time? How many important decisions are postponed, annulled, distorted because a "technical opinion" turns out, in reality, to be an act of disguised power? The Jātaka warns us: specialized knowledge, when separated from ethical responsibility, does not enlighten, but veils.

Image Analysis

Main Subject: Knowledge as a Trap

At the center of the scene, a pair of skeletal and dark hands, evoking an ancient or oppressive force, hold a scroll of parchment. The scroll is "beautifully illustrated" with detailed astrological symbols, constellations, and glyphs (such as the Sanskrit Om), representing "specialized knowledge."

The Concept of "Weaponisation" (Armament)**

The focal point of the visual metaphor is the transformation of knowledge. No light emerges from the scroll, but a multitude of "dark thorny screws". These spines propagate with an organic and malevolent force, clinging to and wrapping themselves around the wrists of prostrate people in the foreground. This element perfectly visualizes how a knowledge that should "enlighten" is transformed into a trap, an instrument of power and control.

Consequences and Context (Background)

In the foreground, the crowd that bends down as a sign of respect and devotion represents humanity subjugated by the authority of distorted knowledge. People are bound by thorns, symbolizing the inability to free themselves from this cultural or political trap.

In the background, the narrative metaphor is completed. A large, ceremonial "wedding canopy" is seen "collapsing." The torn curtains and overturned chairs symbolize the chaos and punishment that ensues when knowledge is used as a weapon. This detail contextualizes the punishment and destruction of the social order.

Visual Style and Atmosphere

The style is "symbolic, ink-wash" (watercolor ink painting). The monochromatic tones of black and gray, with fluid and nuanced brushstrokes, give the image an ancient, mysterious and gloomy air. The use of "red accents for thorns" is a masterful touch: red is the only vivid color and contrasts drastically with the black and white of the rest of the image, emphasizing the danger, blood and punishment of thorns.

Conclusion

The image manages to translate an abstract and complex concept such as "the armament of specialized knowledge" into a coherent, symbolic and dramatic visual narrative. The stylistic choice of ink-wash with red accents enhances the atmosphere of trap and punishment, creating an image that not only illustrates, but comments on the destructive power of manipulated knowledge.

Chapter 2 – The Fatal Day and the Betrayal of the Stars

In the village, meanwhile, everything was ready. The bride had put on the ornaments, the drums had been tuned, the relatives had come from every farmhouse. But the citizens did not arrive.

Morning passed. Then noon. Then the sunset.

The village elders gathered. "They were the ones who set the day," they said, "and now they don't show up. Who do they think they are? We spent, we prepared, we waited. We can't stay with the girl in the house and the offense on her face."

They made a drastic decision, but for their mentality it was only common sense: they found another young man, of the same rank, and with the same wedding already arranged they married the girl to him.

The next day, the inhabitants of the city finally arrived, with carts and gifts, convinced that they were taking the bride home. They found the door adorned with withered flowers and a group of villagers looking at them with an icy air.

'Where is the bride?' they asked.

"He is no longer there. We gave it to someone else. You had appointed the day and did not come. For us, the word given is sacred. He who fails to speak loses the right."

"But we have consulted the ascetic!" replied the citizens. "The stars were against it. We couldn't come."

"The stars? someone laughed. "And what do we care about the stars?" The bride was here, the party was ready. You did not come. Period."

The image captures the dramatic essence of the narrative.

1. Setting and Atmosphere

"Sun-baked village courtyard": The setting is perfectly rendered. The ground is arid, cracked, and the mud houses in the background immediately evoke a rural village.

"Harsh afternoon sun": Lighting is the engine of the atmosphere. The light is warm and intense, creating "long shadows" that cast a feeling of weariness and disillusionment. The color palette is melancholic and dusty, dominated by the ochre of the earth, the faded reds and the dusty blues of the clothes.

2. Central Characters and Action

"The Bride in Red Silk"): In the center of the composition sits the bride, dressed in a rich gold-red lehenga. His pose, with his "eyes downcast", immediately communicates a sense of deep shame, pain and humiliation.

"Angry village elders": To the left of the bride, a group of village elders are accurately portrayed. Their expressions are full of anger and severity, they are "pointing angrily towards the road leading to the city", symbolizing the rejection and breaking of a pact.

3. Secondary Characters and Action

"A rival groom... turban": On the right, under the bridal pavilion, the secondary action takes place. A young man, dressed in ceremonial dress (the "groom rival"), is "hastily adorned with a turban" by two older men. This detail visualizes the village's attempt to defer to a new alliance, in a desperate attempt to keep its word.

4. Symbolic Details

"Wedding pavilion still decorated but... the flowers are wilting": The pavilion on the right is full of marigold garlands (orange and yellow), typical of Indian weddings. However, it is noted that some flowers appear less vivid and begin to wilt, symbolizing the end of the illusion and the corruption of the original festive moment.

"Scattered Ceremonial Objects": Near the bride and under the pavilion, there are plates with offerings and other disordered ritual objects, reinforcing the idea of an interrupted and disorganized ritual.

Narrative and Thematic Commentary

The image interprets the central conflict: the astral system (citizens) vs the given word (village).

The Failure of the Astral System: The old man pointing his finger at the city does not only point to a geographical place, but to an ideology that has betrayed the village. The bride sits alone, the victim of an astrological response that has destroyed her original union.

The Village Resilience and the Given Word: The scene on the right, with the turban, represents the village's response to this betrayal. Quickly, they try to make up for it, to find a substitute who respects the honor and the "word given". It is an act of resistance against a response that comes from outside (the city) and that has violated the agreements.

The melancholy of the palette and the harshness of the shadows underline that, although they try to make up for it, the day "that did not come" left a scar. The village responded with dignity, but the original feast is lost. The image tells a story of disillusionment and cultural tenacity.

Analysis – The social ritual versus the celestial ritual

CELESTIAL ORDER / COSMIC RULES
CELESTIAL ORDER / COSMIC RULES
SOCIAL CONTRACT / HUMAN COMMITMENTS
THE CLASH OF TWO ORDERS: CELESTIAL VS SOCIAL CONTRACT

Here two value systems collide: on the one hand, the given word, which for the rural community is the foundation of trust; on the other hand, astrological observance, which for citizens is a guarantee of cosmic order. The Jātaka does not take sides in favor of the campaign against the city: rather, it highlights a short circuit. When astrology (or any normative system) is used to disregard a commitment already made, it ceases to be wisdom and becomes an alibi.

In the contemporary world, this pattern is repeated in a thousand forms: the contract cancelled by a clause, the promise reneged on in the name of a procedure, the relationship interrupted because "the time was not ripe". The Jātaka reminds us that the right time is never only that of the stars: it is also that of human responsibility.

The image represents a faithful and evocative visual translation of the analysis. Each element described has been precisely integrated into the composition:

1. The Two Architectural Structures and Symbolism

The narrative core is captured through the arrangement of the two main structures:

Left: The Cosmic Order, an imposing temple wall on which a complex "astral map" is "projected". This map is vivid, with cosmic colors (blue, gold, turquoise) and includes the central sun, moon phases, constellations, and zodiac symbols (such as Aries and Libra).

Right: Human Commitment: On the opposite side stands a solid and earthly temple structure (terracotta, ochre), with a warmer atmosphere. A handshake is carved in relief in the center, clearly labeled as "SOCIAL CONTRACT / HUMAN COMMITMENTS". The secondary sculptures show other people shaking hands or making promises, reinforcing the concept of social agreement.

2. Conflict and Settlement

The Chasm: between the two structures there is a dark and deep "chasm", rendered with a geometric and fragmented vortex that suggests an insurmountable abyss. We see a "broken bridge" made of geometric elements that fails to unite the two banks, symbolizing the difficulty of reconciling the two orders.

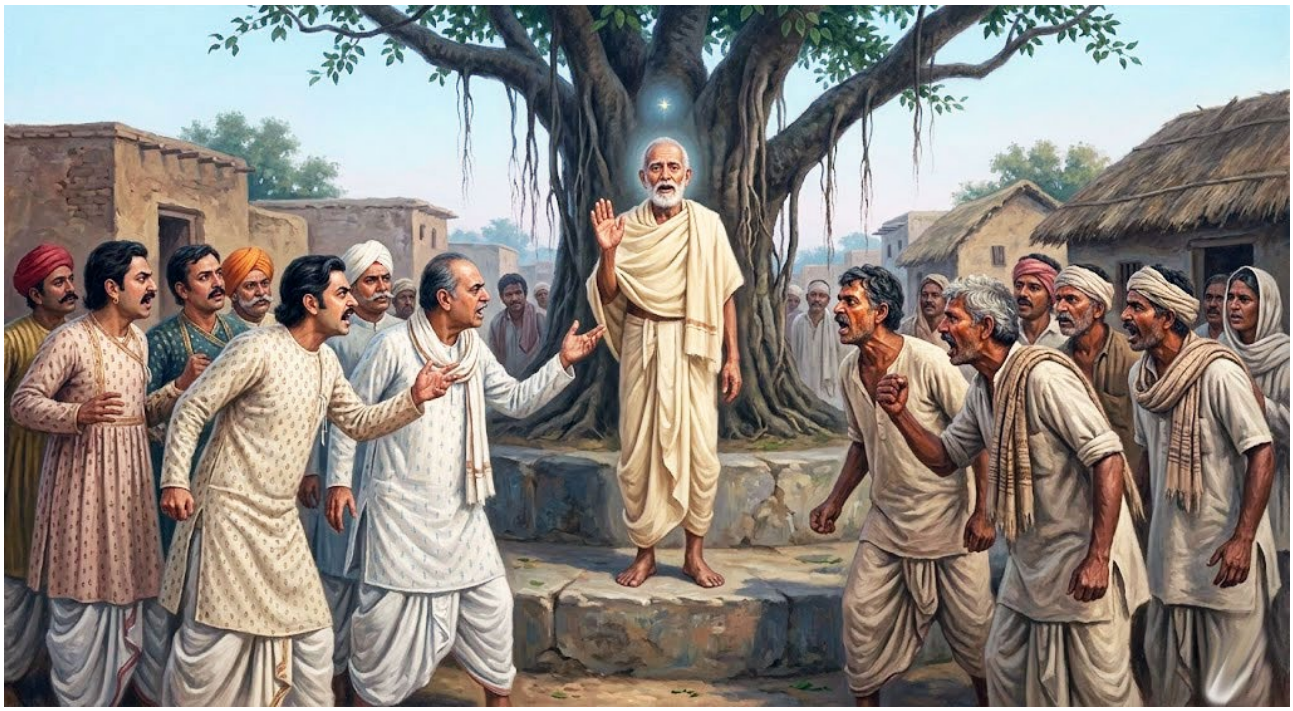
The Tiny Human Figures: they are present on both sides. Respecting the Indian style, they are dressed in traditional clothing and are geometrically stylized. On the left, they look towards the chasm with astrolabes and texts, on the right with rings and documents, but they are "unable to cross".

General Comment

The use of colors is particularly successful: the cold and cosmic tones on the left contrast with the warm and earthy ones on the right, visually emphasizing the dualism described. The central chasm, with its broken bridge and helpless human figures, acts as the emotional engine of the work, visually telling the story of a moment of suspension and insurmountable conflict.

In summary, the image accurately interprets the concept of "Clash of Two Orders".

Chapter 3 – The Quarrel and the Voice of Wisdom



The quarrel between the two families became bitter. The citizens shouted that they had been deceived, the villagers that they had been insulted. Words flew like stones, and a feud was already looming.

It was at that moment that a wise man, a merchant from the city who was in the country on business, stepped forward. He listened to the reasons of both, then turned to his fellow citizens.

"Tell me something," he asked. You followed the ascetic's advice, did you not?"

"Yes. He told us that the stars were unfavorable."

"And did he advise you before you fixed the day?"

The citizens lowered their gaze. "No... we consulted it later."

The wise man smiled. "Back then, the stars were not the problem. He was the ascetic. He felt offended because you didn't ask him first. So he used his science to hurt you. And you, by obeying, have done yourselves far greater harm."

Then, addressing both parties, he pronounced this stanza, which the Master would later keep in the Canon:

"The fool can search the stars,

but fate will always elude him.

Fate is the real star of fate.

What can the stars ever do?"

And he added in simple words: "Luck does not lie in the days, but in the intelligence of those who know how to seize the opportunity. You have lost a bride because you listened to an offended man. Next time, listen to your promise first and then to the stars."

The citizens had to go home empty-handed. The bride was now someone else's.

Image Analysis

1. The Conflict and Factions

The composition is divided into two distinct groups separated by the central figure, creating a visual dynamic of contrast:

Group on the Left (City dwellers in fine cotton): The characters are dressed in dhotis and cotton tunics decorated, with more precious fabrics and with colorful turbans. Their expressions are full of accusation and indignation, with open and aggressive gestures.

Group on the Right (Country folk in rougher cloth): The figures on the right wear more rustic clothes, rough-colored (off-white), with simpler turbans and rough shawls. Their faces show anger and defiance, with a character in the foreground with a clenched fist, symbolizing peasant resistance.

2. The Fulcrum of Calm (A calm elderly man... raises one hand, palm outward)

At the exact center of the composition, as a "fulcrum of calm", stands the wise old man:

Pose and Gesture: Stand, motionless, with the right hand raised with the palm facing outwards (Abhaya Mudra, the gesture of reassurance and peace), interrupting the dispute.

Clothing and Platform: He is dressed simply with a single sheet of raw cotton, barefoot on a "slightly raised stone platform", which symbolically and physically elevates him above the conflict.

Gaze and Expression: His gaze is "gentle but penetrating", directed directly towards the viewer, and his open mouth indicates that he is speaking or "reciting a verse" (stanza), exposing the deception.

3. Setting and Symbolism

The pictorial style is naturalistic and realistic, but includes symbolic elements that load the image with meaning:

Symbolism: The Tree and the Star: Behind the sage stands a large banyan tree (symbol of wisdom, longevity and community), and above his head, "a small star shines faintly". This symbolic detail (a point of white light) connects him directly to the divine order and to the knowledge of hidden things ("he unmasks deception by reading hidden intentions").

Realism: The Background: The background shows a simple Indian village with mud huts and thatched roofs under a "clear sky" at sunset, lending authenticity and context to the conflict.

General Comment

The image manages to capture not only the scenic arrangement, but also the narrative depth of the scene. The conflict between different social classes and factions (citizens vs peasants) is palpable, but the central figure of the essay acts as a visual and emotional anchor. The symbolism of the star and the banyan, combined with the gesture of pacification, perfectly interprets the concept of the sage who possesses a profound and spiritual wisdom capable of unmasking social deception and re-establishing the truth.

Analysis – The wisdom that unmasks

The sage – who in tradition is the Bodhisatta, the future Buddha – does not limit himself to giving a moral; Decode the situation. He debunks the mechanism of deception by showing that the ascetic's authority was not based on astral truth, but on a dynamic of pride and retaliation. His intelligence is contextual: he does not rely on universal knowledge, but reads human relationships.

This is the central lesson of Jātaka 49 and the Appearance vs Reality level: true wisdom is not to possess specialized knowledge, but to know how to recognize when it is used as a weapon. In contemporary language, we might call it critical thinking: the ability to distinguish between an expert who enlightens and an expert who obscures.

Image Analysis and Commentary:

1. Visual and Central Subject Analysis:

It is a macro, hyper-realistic portrait, focused exclusively on the eyes and upper part of a man's face. The skin is rendered with extreme detail (pores, expression lines, thick and dark eyebrows), giving a sense of depth, experience and wisdom. The composition is centered on the gaze, which is "sharp and analytical," directly penetrating the viewer.

2. Interpretation of Symbolic Details in the Eyes:

Left Eye (Iris with Astral Map): A "weak overlay of an astral map" has been applied to the inside of the iris of this eye. The detail is subtle but clear, with constellations, zodiac signs, and geometric connecting lines that merge with the natural structure of the iris, symbolizing cosmic knowledge or the ability to interpret complex patterns.

Right Eye (Reflection of a Heated Dispute): At the exact center of this iris, a miniaturized and detailed reflection of a "heated dispute" is visible. Three figures with agitated expressions and gesticulating hands can

be distinctly seen, who seem to be arguing animatedly. This miniaturized yet sharp visual detail represents man's ability to perceive and analyze human conflicts or hidden intentions.

3. Composition and Symbolism of Light:

The Thread of Light: From the man's "temple," a single "line of light" visibly emerges, tracing a path down the side of the face and descending downwards.

The Broken Astrologer's Staff: The line of light connects directly to a "broken astrologer's staff" that is nearby, on a dusty, ancient surface (similar to a table with blurred old books in the background). The staff is broken in two and adorned with symbols and a compass. The light that connects to this broken object symbolizes the analytical knowledge that "breaks" false claims, wrong prophecies, or illusions (the astrologer's deception).

4. Style and Atmosphere:

The realism of the skin and eyes is impressive, while the integration of the astral map and the dispute in the irises, combined with the line of light and the broken staff, creates a deep, mysterious and meaningful atmosphere. The color palette is warm and earthy (skin tones, bronze of the stick, old books), with the cold blue and white of the line of light contrasting and guiding the eye.

Conclusion:

All the key elements (the analytical eyes, the astral map, the reflected dispute, the line of light, the broken stick) work together to tell the story of a man who, through a deep and analytical gaze, sees beyond the appearances of people and events.

Chapter 4 – The Veil of Appearance. Contemporary reading

Jātaka 49 is not just an ancient story. It is an archetype.

Every day, in our information society, we are bombarded with "experts" who tell us what is favorable and what is not: horoscopes, algorithms, surveys, trends. Often these voices do not help us to make better choices, but paralyze us or push us to betray our commitments in the name of a presumed objectivity.

The core of the story is the separation between knowledge and intention. Did the ascetic really know how to read the stars? Maybe yes. But his knowledge was at the service of his resentment, not of the truth. Thus, his knowledge became a veil that prevented the citizens from seeing reality: they had a bride, a party, a promise; All this was real, concrete. Astrology became an excuse for not taking responsibility for keeping one's word.

Image Analysis: "The Veil of Appearance"

1. Respect for the Subject and the Setting

We are faced with a complex contemporary scene that perfectly translates the ancient mechanism (astrology, destiny) into the technological and bureaucratic present. The setting is a large open-plan office or data center, filled with screens and workstations, immediately evoking our digital age. The title "THE VEIL OF APPEARANCE" and the inscription "Contemporary Metaphor" have been integrated into the text of the image.

2. Interpretation of the Veil and Content

The heart of the prompt is a "translucent, shimmering veil, suspended in mid-air." The image makes this veil like an imposing curtain that divides the composition.

Left Side: Through the veil, you can clearly see a wedding scene in progress. A canopy, a wedding cake, and a married couple (one in white, one in dark) surrounded by guests in formal dress. This scene is "blurred" compared to the rest of the image, maintaining a muffled and ceremonial atmosphere.

Content on the Veil: The surface of the veil is "decorated with astrological symbols and bureaucratic stamps." A large astrological chart (with zodiac signs and constellations) and various red and black stamps bearing crucial inscriptions are clearly distinguished:

APPROVED: Stamp of approval.

"REJECTED": A rejection stamp.

"CONTRACT CANCELLED": Specific registration required.

"URGENTE" (URGENT): Urgency stamp.

Right Side (Algorithms and Contracts): On the right side of the veil, you will find the key elements of the modernization of the mechanism:

Smartphone Screen: A smartphone displays a news item or opinion with the words "EXPERT OPINION: ASTROLOGICAL ALGORITHMS CONFIRMED", perfectly interpreting the idea of relying on pseudo-expert data.

Astrologer's Chart: An ancient folded astrological chart is located near your smartphone.

Contract to Tear: A hand is actively "tearing" a paper contract.

3. Composition and Symbolism

The image takes advantage of the spatial division to tell its story:

The Veil as Barrier and Connection: The veil is not just a barrier, but a means through which people "interact". Through the veil, several people in office clothes (perhaps representing the bureaucracy or society) are depicted "arguing" and gesticulating.

The Ancient to Contemporary Passage: The large astrological chart on the veil acts as a visual bridge between the ancient map on the right and the "digital destiny" represented by the smartphone. The chapter translates "the ancient mechanism into the present (algorithms, bureaucracy)" in an impeccable way.

Conclusion:

All the key elements have been precisely included, and the composition is balanced and symbolically dense. The surreal atmosphere and social criticism are palpable, and the fusion of ancient (astrology) and contemporary (algorithms, bureaucracy, smartphone) elements is handled with great visual intelligence. It is a work that tells a story of disillusionment and cultural tenacity.

In the contemporary world, this veil takes many forms. Think of the bureaucracy that hides behind "procedures" the desire not to solve a problem; to finance that behind "mathematical models" masks speculation; to social media that impose their hierarchies behind "algorithms". In all these cases, knowledge (technical, scientific, normative) is used to veil instead of reveal.

Jātaka 49 invites us to ask a simple but radical question: Who speaks? And why? It does not ask to give up specialized knowledge, but not to suffer it passively. Heroism, in this first level, is passive: do not fall into deception. It is a heroism of resistance, of attention, of suspension of automatic judgment.

The image:

1. Setting and Atmosphere

Modern Office: The setting is rendered through the cubicle structure typical of contemporary open-plan offices.

Cool Fluorescent Light: Lighting is the engine of the atmosphere. The image is pervaded by a cold, aseptic and slightly greenish light, typical of fluorescent tubes, which deprives the environment of any heat and conveys a sense of isolation and desolation.

Flat dystopian tone: The photographic rendering, while realistic, has a dystopian "flattening". The desaturation of colors, the dominant grays and whites, and the apparent order that hides the paper chaos contribute to creating a vision of an oppressive and lifeless bureaucratic future.

2. Key Elements of the Desk

The narrative core is captured through the objects on the desk:

Desk Covered in Papers: The desk is literally invaded by piles of documents, piles of scattered papers and folders, which immediately evoke a bureaucratic maze.

Laptop Screen: In the center, a laptop that is turned on casts a cool light. The screen clearly and legibly displays the text "ALGORITHM: UNFAVOURABLE", labeled with a sad red icon, symbolizing the unquestionable algorithmic verdict.

Calendar: A wall calendar hanging on the wall clearly shows the date "OCT 14" erased with a big red "X", indicating a cancelled event or a missed deadline.

Half Hidden Wedding Invitation: This is the crucial detail that connects bureaucracy to human life. Under piles of "REGULATION PRINTED" and "PROCEDURAL MANUALS", you can see an elegant wedding invitation with cursive fonts, crushed and hidden by bureaucracy.

3. Characters and Storytelling

Blurred Figure: On the right, a male figure in office clothes is captured in motion, walking away with his back turned, is blurred and his pose with his head down clearly conveys "disappointment" and defeat in the face of the algorithm's verdict. The shallow depth of field accentuates the feeling of separation and indifference of the system.

General Comment

The composition is balanced and the spatial division between bureaucratic chaos and the defeated human figure is clear and effective.

The thematic transition from the "ancient mechanism" (destiny) to the "technological present" (algorithms, bureaucracy) is rendered with visual intelligence. The wedding invitation hidden under piles of printed regulations is a powerful visual metaphor for the impossibility for human life and its joys to flourish under the weight of an impersonal, algorithmic system. The cold light and desaturated tone complete the work, telling a story of disillusionment and cultural tenacity.

Conclusion – The Star Inside Fate

The last stanza of the essay condenses the message into an almost aphoristic formula: "Fate is the true star of fate". You don't have to look up at the sky to find the right moment; The right time is when you act intelligently, faithfully and lucidly.

In the context of our larger essay (The Axis of Intelligence), this Jātaka is the gateway. After learning not to be deceived (Level 1), we will be able to face Level 2 (Excess vs Measure) with the Jātaka 56, 59, 60; Level 3 (Body vs Mind) with Jātaka 55, 57, 58; and finally Level 4 (Power vs Forgiveness) with Jātaka 50, 51, 52. But it all starts here: with the awareness that the first act of intelligence is to unmask appearance.

Image Analysis and Commentary: "The True Star"

1. Respect for the Subject and the Setting:

We are faced with a serene and meditative night scene. The protagonist is a solitary figure, an elderly and wise man, dressed in traditional and simple clothes, who stands on a grassy hill and looks upwards. The prompt called for a "Lone figure (the wise man)", and the figure presented perfectly embodies this description, with a calm and contemplative expression.

2. Inner Star Interpretation:

The thematic and visual core of the prompt is the "inner star". Instead of showing a dominant constellation in the vast, starry night sky, the image sends a "soft light" right from the man's chest. This warm, golden light forms a clear, bright star within his chest, symbolizing the inner wisdom and spiritual light that resides within him, ("the inner star"). The night sky, while vast and full of distant stars and subtle nebulae, does not have a dominant constellation, leaving the inner star to be the central point of light.

3. Composition and Key Details:

A crucial element of the narrative is the presence of symbolic objects in the grassy foreground:

Imprint and Bridal Garland: a small imprint and a withered wedding wreath can be distinctly seen. The wreath is made of wilted white flowers and dry leaves and symbolizes a past event or a choice left behind. The imprint is imprinted in the dark ground, suggesting a past walk or an absence.

Background: The background shows a distant village and town, both peacefully lit up under the starry sky. The warm, golden lights of the houses in the village and the farthest town create a delicate contrast with the inner star and the vastness of the deep blue sky.

Conclusion:

All the key elements (the wise figure, the inner star, the withered wedding wreath, the footprint, the vast sky, the distant village and city) work together to tell the story of a man who, through a deep and meditative gaze, finds his true inner star and spiritual light, leaving the past behind.

And perhaps, today more than ever, we need this intelligence. In a world where information has become noise, where experts multiply and promises dissolve, Jātaka 49 reminds us that the real star is not up there, but in our ability to recognize deception and keep our word.

Image Analysis and Commentary:

Interpretation of the Inner Star:

The thematic and visual core is the "inner star", a soft light from the man's chest. This warm, golden light forms a clear, bright star within his chest, symbolizing the inner wisdom and spiritual light that resides within him. The night sky, while vast and full of distant stars and subtle nebulae, does not have a dominant constellation, leaving the inner star to be the central point of light.

Composition and Key Details:

A crucial element of the narrative is the presence of symbolic objects in the grassy foreground, scattered on the ground:

Bridal Garland and Imprint: The garland is made of wilted white flowers and dried leaves, symbolizing a past event or a choice left behind. The footprint suggests a past journey or an absence.

Astrological Map and Calendar: A broken astrological map and a discarded calendar with a date crossed out with a large red "X" are also found on the grounds. These objects represent the abandonment of false pretensions, wrong prophecies, or fictitious deadlines.

Conclusion:

All the key elements (the wise figure, the inner star, the withered wedding wreath, the footprint, the vast sky, the distant village and city, the broken astrological map and the discarded calendar) are present and work together to tell the story of a man who, through a deep and meditative gaze, finds his true inner star and spiritual light, leaving the past behind.

Marriage and the Algorithm

An ironic fairy tale from the days of wi-fi

Once upon a time, in a city not too far from where you are reading, there were two wealthy families who had decided to unite their offspring in marriage. The date was set well in advance, the caterers were booked, the guest lists were taken care of as if they were peace treaties. Everything proceeded according to the sacred protocols of civil life.

But a week before the wedding, the father of the bride had an epiphany: "What if we asked the influencer's opinion?".

The influencer in question was called Astromarco, a young man with tufted hair, a Hawaiian shirt and a following of three million people on Instagram. He published every morning the "authentic horoscope" (for a fee) and sold crystals that "harmonized the energy flows of the portfolio". The bride's family had been following him for years, and of course paid him for every important decision.

When asked if the chosen date was propitious, Astromarco felt betrayed. "Didn't they ask me before? Did they fix the day without consulting me? Ah, these bourgeoisie believe they can do without my wisdom." He

closed himself in meditation in front of a kale smoothie and, after posting a story with a thoughtful face, he replied:

"The date is absolutely unfavorable. Mercury is retrograde, but not only that: Venus is also in conflict with an asteroid named Influencer-unheard. If you celebrate on that day, your union will be plagued by negative comments and a drop in followers."

The bride's family, panicked, canceled everything at the last moment. They did not show up for the wedding.

In the meantime, the groom's family had set up a tent with wildflowers, a dance floor and a buffet of artisanal cold cuts. They waited for hours, then the groom's father, a man of few stories but of great patience, declared: "They have fixed the day, and they are not coming? So we marry the boy with the baker's daughter. The party is paid for anyway".

And so they did.

The next day, when the bride's relatives arrived with apologies and bouquets of orchids, they found the tent empty and the baker already toasting.

A furious quarrel ensued. The citizens blamed Astromarcus; the villagers (now related to the baker) laughed and said: "You and your influencers. We trust sourdough, not Instagram stories".

An elderly lady arrived to settle the matter, a retired librarian with a Twitter account followed by seventeen people. He listened to both sides, then addressed the citizens:

"You followed Astromarco's advice, didn't you? And he only gave you the answer after you had set the date, right?"

"Yes, but he's an expert!"

"My dear," sighed the librarian, "Astromarco is not an astrologer, he is a seller of anxiety. He didn't care about the stars; He cared to be consulted first, because without him you are nobody. And you, by obeying, have lost a son-in-law. Next time, remember: luck does not lie in the stars, but in the intelligence of those who are not enchanted by someone in a Hawaiian shirt."

Then, with a smile, he added: "And anyway, Mercury retrograde does not exist. It is just an optical illusion caused by late capitalism."

The moral of the story? Today, as two thousand years ago, the real power is not of those who read the stars, but of those who unmask those who use them for their own interests. And if you want to get married, consult the baker. At least he really knows flour.

Scene 53 Puṇṇapāti (The Full Cup): The Wine and the Poison.

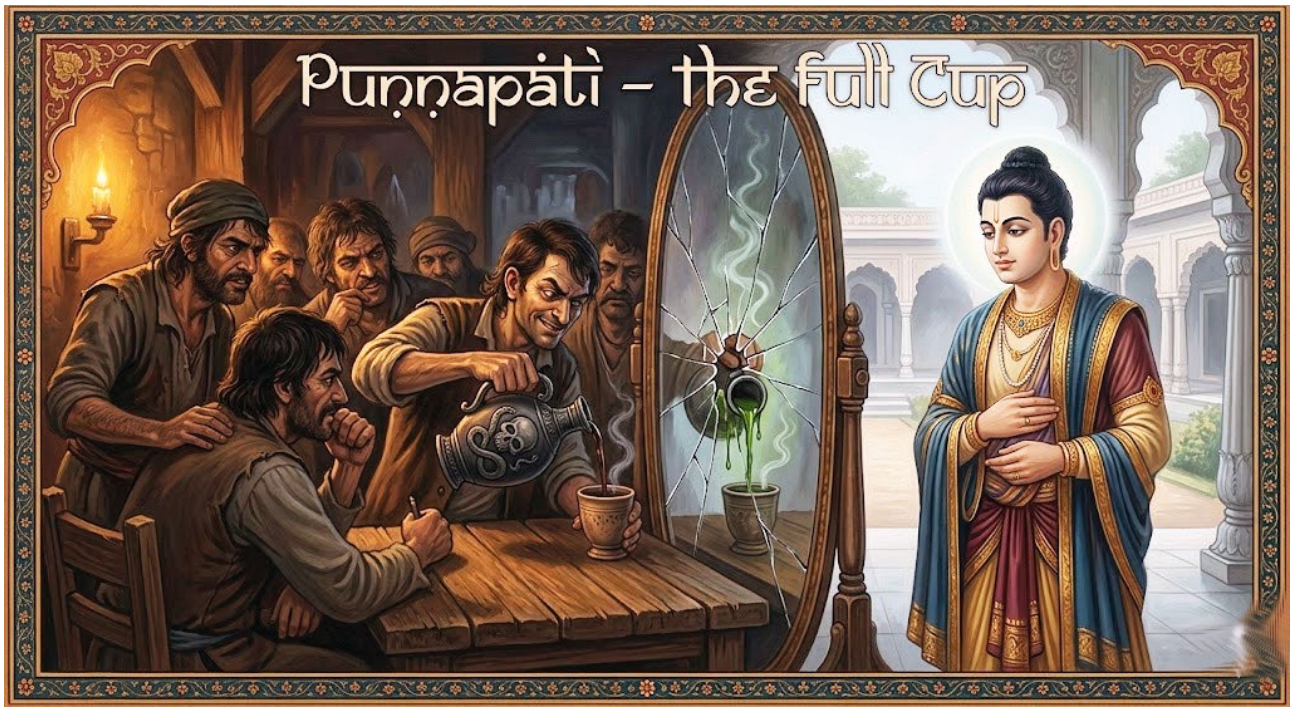
Video post blogger

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/punnapati-jataka-53-la-coppa-piena-vino.html

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/punnapati-jataka-53-full-cup-wine.html

https://youtu.be/Hpsivf0ccoM

The criminals do not drink the drink they offer. Twin: Desire vs Self-preservation. The hero survives because he reads behavior (body language) instead of trusting the substance.



The image captures the philosophical and moral atmosphere that underlies the scene.

1. Composition and Scenic Structure

The image creates a "split scene composition" through the use of a broken mirror positioned in the center. This mirror acts as a physical and symbolic boundary, dividing the work into two distinct but interconnected worlds.

2. The Sinister Scene: The Darkness and the Deception

Setting: It is a dark and crowded tavern, wrapped in a dense and smoky atmosphere.

Characters: The "shady pimps" are depicted with gloomy and guarded faces, huddled around a table. The complicit expression of the man in the center and the gazes of others evoke a sense of conspiracy and malice.

Key details:

The action of pouring liquid from a jug to a cup is central.

The carafe itself clearly features the symbols of a skull and intertwined snakes, a visible engraving that is integrated into the style of the object.

The illumination is a "warm amber light", emanating from a torch on the wall, which casts deep shadows.

3. The Right Scene: Serenity and Awareness

In stark contrast, the right half represents clarity:

The Character: The divine figure (presumably the Bodhisatta or Anāthapiṇḍika) is rendered with refinement. He wears rich, detailed robes in gold and blue. His pose is calm and contemplative.

Key details:

The Gaze: His gaze is not directed directly at the mirror, but seems to perceive what is happening on the other side, embodying an inner vision or foresight.

The Halo: A "fao halo of awareness" surrounds his head, separating him from worldliness and symbolizing his enlightened nature.

The Environment and the Light: The background is a serene courtyard or pavilion, illuminated by a "fresh clarity".

4. The Broken Mirror: The Heart of Illusion

This is the most crucial narrative element:

The Function: The mirror does not simply reflect the scene, but reveals it for what it is. While on the left we see only wine, the mirror shows the carafe pouring a fluorescent green liquid, which immediately evokes the idea of poison.

Symbolism: The cracks on the mirror symbolize the fracture between appearance and reality, or the end of illusion. The intersection between real action (pouring) and altered reflection (poison) is handled with visual care.

5. Style and Text

Finally, the general aesthetics:

Style: The image blends with the style "classic Indian miniature painting with a touch of modern surrealism". Note the intricate details in the fabrics, jewels and architectural motifs, typical of Indian miniatures (Mughal or Rajput), combined with a more realistic rendering of faces and an almost photographic light management. The ornamental frame completes the effect.

The Text: The title "Puṇṇapāti – The Full Cup" is reminiscent of Sanskrit or dewanagari calligraphy while being legible in Latin characters. It is placed at the top, like a dedicatory inscription, in a clean and non-intrusive way.

Wine and Poison

A tale from the Puṇṇapāti-Jātaka

Introduction: The Veil of Truth

In the great tapestry of the Jātakas, there is an initial, foundational level, which we could call The Veil of Truth. Here, the twin stars of the cycle are Appearance and Reality. Stories of this level do not yet speak to us of titanic feats or warlike heroism; rather, they show us a heroism of a "passive" type, but no less essential. It is the art of not falling into deception, of dismantling the illusions that society, nature and desire build before our eyes. Jātaka 53, the Puṇṇapāti (The Full Cup), is the second story of this initiatory cycle, and perfectly embodies the twin Desire vs Self-preservation. It teaches us that true wisdom does not lie in rejecting a priori, but in knowing how to read reality behind the mask of appearances, trusting in the silent language of behavior rather than in the flattery of words and substances.

This image, entitled The Veil of Truth, is a visual representation of the contrast between appearance and reality, structured on several narrative levels that recall the Buddhist tradition.

1. The Featured Scene: The Appearance (The Veil)

On the right, the image presents a welcoming and festive scene:

The Kiosk: A stall decorated with garlands of orange and yellow marigolds, typical of Indian celebrations. The atmosphere is warm and inviting.

The Illusion: A young woman receives a golden cup filled with a crimson liquid. Inside the cup you can see the reflection of a sweet and smiling face, which symbolizes how desire or deception can appear attractive and reassuring.

The Characters: The female figures offering the drink have benevolent and friendly expressions, perfectly hiding the true nature of the situation.

2. The second level: the hidden reality

In the center, embedded like a "fracture" in reality, the hidden layer emerges that reveals the truth:

The Corrupted Cup: The cup itself appears cracked and broken here. A green snake is wrapped around it and drinks from the liquid, turning "pleasure" into poison.

The Faces of the Conspirators: Behind the green-black veil of shadow, the faces of the pimps are visible. They are no longer the gentle faces of the foreground, but "greedy masks" with grotesque, mischievous and predatory expressions. They represent the danger hidden behind an apparently generous offer.

3. The Figure of the Sage (The Bodhisatta)

On the left, in stark contrast to the chaos of the crowd and the deception of the kiosk, stands the Bodhisatta:

Posture and Gesture: He is depicted with a luminous aura of awareness. He holds a stick in one hand while the other is raised in a gesture of observation and admonition. His calmness represents the mind that does not allow itself to be shaken by appearances.

Awareness: His gaze is turned toward the scene, but his expression suggests that he sees beyond the veil of marigolds, directly sensing the toxic nature of the offering.

4. Use of Light and Color

The image uses dual lighting to separate moral concepts:

Golden Sunlight: It illuminates the street of Sāvatthi and the outside of the kiosk, representing the sensitive world and what we want to see.

Green-Black Shadow: A cold, sinister light emanates from the midsection, piercing the golden illusion to show corruption.

Conclusion

The image, an example of narrative surrealism applied to classical Indian art, manages to visually communicate a complex philosophical concept: the need for discernment (prajñā) to identify danger and suffering even when they are masked as beauty and pleasure.

Chapter I: The Covenant in the City of Illusion

In Savatthi, the city that resounded with the fame of the generous Anathapindika and the teachings of the Buddha, the germ of deception also swarmed with it. In a notorious tavern, a group of criminals met in council. Their faces were hollowed out not by thirst for wisdom, but for that drink that clouds the mind and

empties the bags. Their dilemma was as old as the world: the money was gone, but the lust for drunkenness was still burning.

"We don't have a penny left to drink," grumbled one of them, twirling an empty cup. "How do we do it?"

A silence full of frustration descended on the company. It was then that one of them, the most cunning and evil, the "ringleader" as the ancient text defines him, split the air with a sinuous smile.

'Do not despair,' he whispered, 'I have a little plan.'

All eyes were on him. The plan was diabolical in its simplicity. Anathapindika, the Grand Treasurer, was known for his habit of going to the king wearing his most precious rings and richest robes. They would set up a liquor stall, an oasis of pleasure along his way. They would have prepared a drink drugged with a powerful narcotic. When the rich merchant came by, they would invite him in a friendly manner: "Come and drink with us, Grand Treasurer!" Then, after tackling him with flattery and cups, they would have stripped him of his belongings, and then celebrated the loot with more wine, this time honest.

The plan was met with evil joy. It was a perfect deception, a poison hidden in a cup of pleasure. The appearance of a rare drink and friendly hospitality would have concealed the reality of a deadly ambush.

The image manages to capture not only the specific elements of the scene (the characters, objects) but also the atmosphere and the required art style in a very convincing way. The fusion between the dramatic structure of Western lighting and Eastern architectural details is masterfully executed.

1. Framing and Atmosphere:

The environment is clearly dim. The air is dense, with a thin veil of smoke (or atmospheric haze) visible between the characters and around the lights, and contributes to the feeling of a closed and shady environment. The materials (raw wood of the table, walls of raw mud) convey the idea of a poor and clandestine tavern.

2. The Characters:

There are exactly five men. All of them have a decidedly "rough" appearance: unkempt beards, long and messy hair, simple and worn clothes, and angular and marked physiognomies. They are all gathered and concentrated around the table, creating an intimate and conspiratorial composition.

3. The Central Action:

In the center of the table, the older, bearded man is clearly the chief conspirator. His mouth is slightly open, as if he were speaking softly (whispering), and his hand raised in a gesture of command. The sketch on the parchment is clear: it depicts a man with a turban, jewels (chains, rings) and elaborate clothes, perfectly identifiable as the "rich merchant".

4. Trap Details:

To the center-right of the table is a dark earthenware vase with a white skull clearly printed on it (the symbol of poison or danger). Next to it is a bunch of dried herbs. On the far right, another man is actively mixing the contents of a metal mug (presumed to contain the "wine" and "powder") with a wooden ladle, visually completing the conspiracy.

5. Lighting and Shadows (Chiaroscuro):

This is the strong point of the image. The only sources of light are the two candles and the oil lamp on the table. The chiaroscuro technique is beautifully rendered: the faces and hands of the conspirators are sculpted by the strong light that emerges from the surrounding darkness. On the mud-brick walls in the background, the shadows of the characters are elongated, distorted and giant, creating exactly that "threatening" atmosphere required.

6. The Window and Background:

On the wall there is a small arched window with metal bars. Through this opening, you see a night scene of the city. The city is illuminated by many small warm lights, suggesting a vibrant and "prosperous" nightlife. The lights in the distance contrast strongly with the darkness and grim atmosphere of the tavern in the foreground, emphasizing the idea of the city's oblivious "innocence" compared to the evil plan in place.

7. The Art Style:

The lighting is unmistakably Caravaggio-esque: dramatic, theatrical, with deep blacks and localized lights. However, the architectural setting is not a dark Roman tavern, but an Asian setting. The pointed arches, ornate columns, and wood-carved patterns above and around the window are clearly Indian architectural details.

Chapter II: The Guest, Who Doesn't Drink

Upon returning from the palace, Anathapindika, wrapped in his robes, ran into their trap. The criminals met him with bows and smiles, singing the praises of their "extraordinary" liqueur, insistently inviting him to enter their shop.

'Taste it, sir! It's a nectar! You can't leave without trying it!"

For a moment, the mind of the Buddha's faithful disciple wavered, not from the temptation of the drink, but from the moral choice. The original text reveals it to us with a clear thought: "How can a believer, who has found Salvation, touch strong drinks?". His faith was a barrier against desire.

But Anathapindika was not a man who turned his back on the world. He had intuited the game. Instead of walking away with disdain, he decided to enter the same den as them. His heroism was not in avoiding danger, but in facing it with the sheer force of wisdom. He knew that these scoundrels would never drink the same concoction as them. And that's where their weakness lurked.

He entered the shop. His eyes, trained by commerce and life, observed every detail. He saw the full cups, their guarded looks, the way they handed him the liquor but avoided lifting their lips from their containers. Body language spoke louder than a thousand praises. Self-preservation and Desire struggled in their faces: the desire to enrich themselves drove them to act, but the instinct for survival kept them from tasting their own poison.

At that point, Anathapindika changed the cards on the table. Calmly, but in a firm voice that pierced hypocrisy, he openly accused them.

"You are cheats. You have drugged this liquor with the intention of robbing unsuspecting travelers. You are here, sitting in your shop, singing the praises of this drink, but not one of you dares to drink it. If it is really pure, then drink first."

The revelation was like a bolt from the blue. The mask of Appearance fell, revealing the Reality of their cowardice. Unmasked, with no possibility of reply, the criminals fled in panic, leaving the cups full and the plan shattered. Anathapindika had not needed physical strength; The truth had been enough for him. He returned home and, feeling the need to share the teaching, went to the monastery of Jetavana to tell everything to the Master.

The image manages to capture not only the specific elements of the scene (characters, actions, objects) but also the atmosphere and the psychological moment required, "the moment of intuition". Composition and lighting work together to tell the story without the need for words.

1. Main Character (Anāthapiṇḍika):

The central character is unmistakable, standing in the exact center of the scene. He wears a clean white robe with rich gold borders, which clearly distinguish him from the others. His posture is calm and elegant.

2. The "Gangsters" / Pimps:

A group of men looking "rougher" and dressed in darker colors surrounds him. On the left, a man explicitly offers a full cup with an inviting gesture. The facial expressions are complex: the man offering the cup looks anxious and perhaps a little nervous, while others in the background watch with palpable tension (the man on the far right in green has an almost worried or suspicious expression).

3. The Cups and the Observation Fire:

In the foreground, on a low table, there are exactly five full, untouched cups. Anāthapiṇḍika's gaze is clearly directed downwards towards these cups, not towards the man who offers him the drink. Although the expression is solemn and calm, there is a subtle calmness that could be interpreted as the required "smile of recognition", i.e. the moment when he realizes that something is wrong because the guests do not drink his drink.

4. Composition and Contrast:

His calm and centrality contrast with the frenetic action and theatrical gestures (hands open, cups raised) of the other men. It is the fixed point in a moving scene.

5. Lighting:

There is a divine light or strong light source that descends directly above his head, creating a halo and illuminating his face and the cups on the table in the foreground. The faces of other men are more discontinuously illuminated and remain more in shadow, emphasizing their ambiguous or stealthy nature.

Chapter III: The Echo of an Ancient Wisdom

The Buddha, listening to the story of the lay faithful, smiled with the benevolence of one who knows the infinite cycle of actions. 'On this occasion, layman,' said he, 'it was you who exposed these scoundrels. But know that even in the past, the wicked tried to deceive the good and wise of those times."

And, at Anathapindika's request, the Master opened the gates of time, narrating the Jātaka.

In an ancient era, when Brahmadatta reigned in Benares, the Bodhisatta, the being destined for perfect enlightenment, was precisely the Treasurer of the city. History repeated itself with the same plot. The same gang of criminals, with the same thirst for profit, set the same trap. The Bodhisatta, like his successor, had no desire to drink, but accepted the invitation not out of gluttony, but for the sole purpose of exposing them.

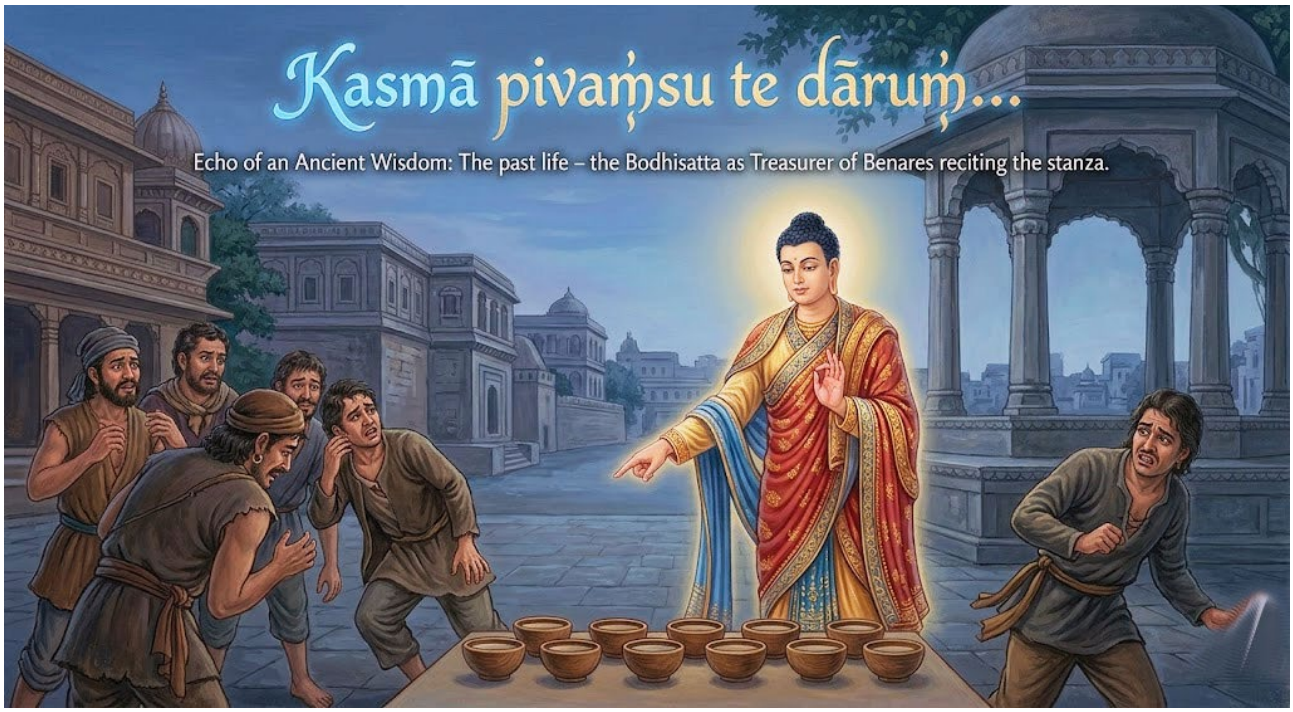
Even then, his cunning was more acute. He pretended to be in a hurry. 'Sit here,' he said nonchalantly, 'till I have gone to the king and returned; then I'll think about it." Returning, while the criminals called him back with renewed insistence, the Bodhisatta did not take his eyes off the cups.

The original text shows him as he "fixes his gaze on the drugged bowls". Then, with a lucidity that is the quintessence of wisdom, he pronounces a verse that is both an accusation and a philosophical maxim. The Pali text reads:

"Kasmā pivaṃsu te dāruṃ, yaṃ tvaṃ vaṇṇesi pāniyaṃ; na hetaṃ pāniyaṃ seṭṭhaṃ, yattha pītaṃ na dissatī"ti.

Why should I drink the drink you praise so much? It's certainly not an excellent drink, one that you don't see anyone drinking."

His logic was unexceptionable: if the wine had been good and harmless, they themselves would have drunk it. Their behavior (refraining from drinking) was the clearest evidence of their guilt (drugging him). It was once again the power of observation that triumphed, and the criminals fled. The Bodhisatta lived his days in righteousness, then passed on to a new existence according to the fruits of his deeds.


Kasmā pivaṃsu te dāruṃ...
Echo of an Ancient Wisdom: The past life – the Bodhisatta as Treasurer of Benares reciting the stanza.

The image manages to capture the narrative atmosphere, art style, and all the specific elements required very accurately. The composition is balanced and tells the story clearly.

1. The Framing and the Background:

The environment is an ancient urban street at night. The buildings in the background have classical Indian architectural elements (turrets, pointed porticoes, ornate balconies) consistent with a historic Benares. The use of diffused light at night creates the correct atmosphere for detection.

2. The main character (the bodhisatta):

The central figure is undoubtedly the Bodhisatta, with a luminous halo (a hallmark of enlightenment) and dressed in rich red, gold, and blue ministerial robes, distinguishing him as a figure of authority and wisdom.

With his right hand, the Bodhisatta explicitly points to the row of bowls filled with liquid on the low table in the foreground. With his left hand, he performs the vitarka mudra (the gesture of teaching), completing the required action.

3. The Pali Scripture:

At the top of the image, above the Bodhisatta, appears the inscription Pali "Kasmā pivaṃsu te dāruṃ...". It is rendered with a luminous writing, blue and gold, as if it were suspended in the air, just as required. The handwriting is elegant and legible.

4. The "Gangsters" (Pimps):

On the left, a group of simply dressed pimps curl up, hiding behind their hands and showing looks of pure terror and bewilderment. On the right, another ruffian is already turned, ready to flee with an expression of horror, fleeing from the revelation. Their poses and facial expressions clearly communicate "shame and fear."

5. Atmosphere and Color:

The nighttime illumination is dominated by cool blues and grays, while the soft gold and yellow of the Bodhisatta's halo and luminous stanza bring the "virtuous clarity" and sense of karmic continuity. The contrast between bright gold and cool blue creates the required balance.

6. Art Style:

The style strongly evokes traditional Indian mural painting (such as Ajanta). The defined contours, limited depth, and narrative composition are characteristic of Thangka art and Ajanta caves, adapted to a modern sharpness. Thangka art is also recalled by the use of saturated colors and intricate details in clothing.

Chapter IV: Analysis of a Gaze

This Jātaka, the second of Level 1, acts as a refined mechanism for dismantling illusions. The twin couple Desire vs Self-preservation is the engine of the whole story.

The criminals are slaves of desire (for wealth, for pleasure) to the point of devising a plan that requires them to act of extreme abstinence: not to drink. Their self-control, however, is parasitic and false. It is a selfish self-preservation that feeds on the ruin of others. Their non-action (not drinking) is a criminal action.

The hero, on the contrary, embodies a superior self-preservation, which is not cowardice but wisdom. His heroism is "passive" because it does not consist in a physical struggle, but in an active resistance of the intellect. He knows how to resist the flattery of desire (wine) and knows how to recognize danger not through the knowledge of the substance, but through the reading of behavior. Wisdom here is eminently practical: it is the ability to see the discrepancy between speech and action, between promise (wine is good) and reality (no one drinks it). It is a hermeneutic of suspicion applied to everyday life.

In this sense, Jātaka 53 serves as a perfect complement to the first Jātaka of the level (49, Nakkhatta-Jātaka, on friendship and deception) and prepares the ground for the following ones, teaching that the way to "veil" the truth passes through an education of the gaze.

The image is a powerful example of conceptual surrealism, where realistic elements come together in a symbolic composition to tell a story of perception and revelation.

Composition and Narrative Structure

The image is built on two main planes that conceptually overlap:

The Upper Floor (The Appearance/The Illusion): Dominated by a bright and warm palette of watercolors (gold, yellow, orange) and touches of cold blue. There is an almost divine or ethereal atmosphere.

The Lower Floor (The Hidden Reality): Centered on the golden cup with the blood-red liquid. It is a "portal" or a "fracture" that tears through the luminous illusion to show a dark and threatening shadow.

The Divine Personage (The Bodhisatta/Anāthapiṇḍika): He is represented only by his eyes, which emerge from the luminous haze. Their expression is calm, serene and contemplative. They do not look directly at the cup, but seem to perceive the underlying truth through an inner vision or foresight. The luminous aura around the head symbolizes its illuminated nature.

Symbolic objects

The Golden Cup: It is the central element of desire and illusion. On the upper floor, it appears as a precious and inviting object.

The Red Liquid: Apparently a festive drink, inside the lower "portal" it reveals its toxic nature: a blood-red liquid with disturbed ripples, symbolizing danger or poison.

Use of Light and Color

The use of light is fundamental to the moral meaning of the work:

Golden/Warm Sunlight: Illuminates the upper floor, representing the sensible world, what we want to see, and the attractiveness of desire.

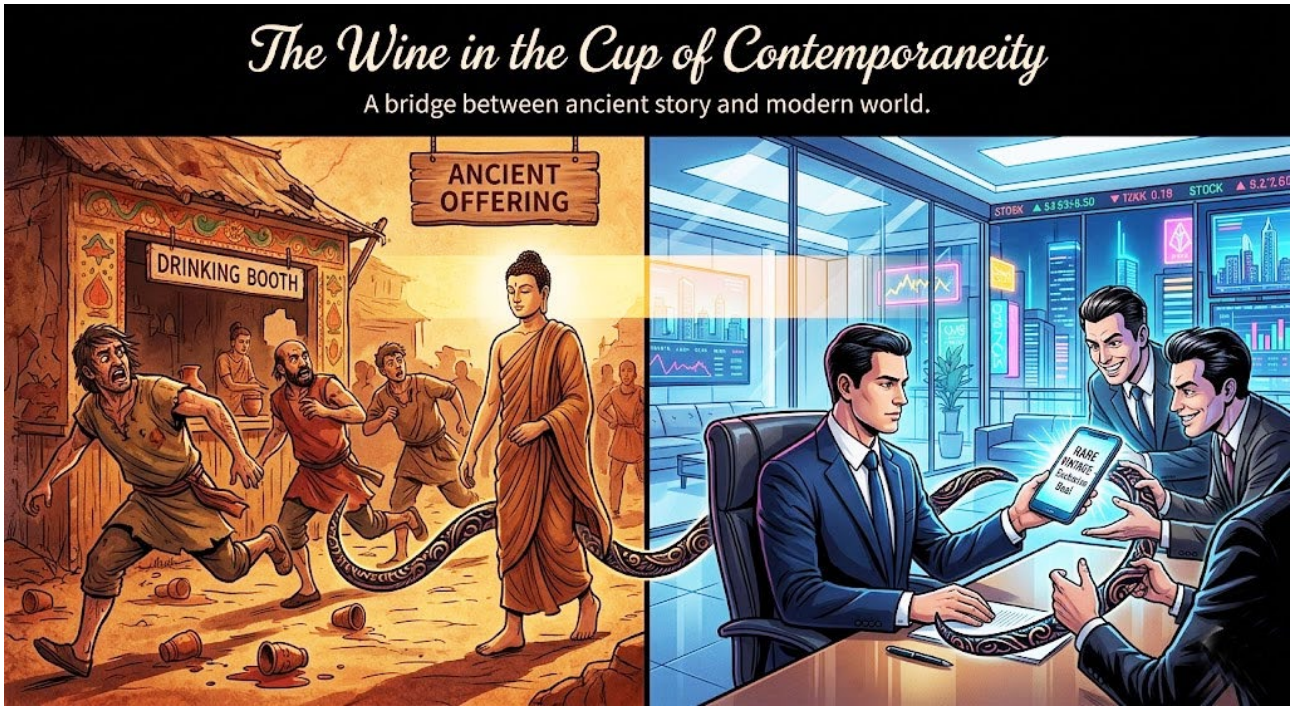
Green-Black/Cold Shadow: A cold, sinister light emanates from the lower middle section, representing the corruption, deceit, and toxic reality that lurks behind the illusion.

Conclusion: Wine in the Cup of Contemporaneity

Almost two thousand and five hundred years later, the lesson of the Puṇṇapāti-Jātaka resonates with surprising timeliness. We live in an era that the philosopher Byung-Chul Han called "transparency", but which is actually the "society of positivity", where everything is exposed, praised and consumed, often hiding a void or danger.

The trap of the criminals of Savatthi is the same as in our time. How many times do we find ourselves faced with products, ideologies or relationships that are "praised" with insistence, but which those who promote them do not use? Think of the world of finance, with advisors selling risky products that they themselves would never buy. Think of social media, where a happy and full life is praised while loneliness reigns behind the screen. Think of disinformation, where poisoned news spreads that the first popularizers do not trust enough to put into practice.

The Jātaka teaches us that the antidote to these forms of "poison" is not just information, but a deeper form of awareness that we might call attention. The attention to body language, to the consistency between saying and doing, to the small but fundamental inconsistency: if something is so good, why don't those who offer it enjoy it first? In a world saturated with advertising messages and social pressures, the "passive" heroism of the Bodhisatta becomes a revolutionary act: stop, observe, not fall into deception. It is the art of discerning wine from poison, not with the palate, but with the wisdom of a gaze that knows how to read reality beyond appearances. And this, perhaps, is the greatest of riches.



The image manages to capture not only the required visual elements, but also the philosophical meaning and parallelism between ancient and modern, creating a real visual and conceptual "bridge".

1. Title and Subtitle

It includes the title "The Wine in the Cup of Contemporaneity" and the subtitle "A bridge between ancient story and modern world".

2. Composition

The vertical division is clear and balanced between the two worlds. The art style adapts the textures: more "fresco/parchment" on the left for the ancient, and more "vector/futurist" on the right for the modern.

3. The Left Side: Ancient Scene

"The ancient scene: the Bodhisatta walking away from the abandoned stall, the gangsters fleeing." We see the central figure of the Bodhisatta (with halo and monk's robes) walking calmly to the right, away from the "DRINKING BOOTH" stall. On the left, the "gangsters" (depicted as ancient brigands) flee in terror, with cups on the ground suggesting the revelation of poison. There is also the addition of an "ANCIENT OFFERING" sign that reinforces the concept.

4. The Right Side: Contemporary Parallel

"A contemporary parallelism: an elegant office or living room with glass walls; a well-dressed businessman who is offered a bright smartphone with exaggerated claims from two smiling figures and shiny clothes."

The setting is a futuristic office of high finance, with screens full of stock market charts and neon. The businessman is impeccable in a suit and tie. The two figures who flatter him (the modern "bad guys") are dressed in dark, shiny clothes and smile insinuatingly. The smartphone emits a bright light and clearly displays the text "RARE VINTAGE – Exclusive Deal".

5. Expression and Pose of the Protagonists

"The expression of the businessman mirrors that of the ancient hero – calm, observant, he is not yet taking the bait."

The businessman looks at the screen with seriousness and discernment, with his hand still on the desk (he is not grasping it). His calm and measured pose mirrors the calm walk of the Bodhisatta on the left, in contrast to the frenzy of the secondary characters.

6. The Snake Symbol (The Key Element)

"A stylized snake subtly winds through both sides, connecting the drugged liquor of the past to the digital junkie information of today."

This is the most impressive detail. A bioluminescent, dark snake tentacle/body extends from the ancient scene (wrapping itself behind the Bodhisatta) and crosses the dividing line, wrapping itself around the modern smartphone. This unique visual element directly connects the two temptations (liquor/drugged information) through time.

7. Colors and Lighting

"The colors go from warm earth tones to cool blues and neon, joined by a single band of golden light."

The old side is dominated by ochre, browns and rust (warm earth tones). The modern side is a mix of cool blues, cyans, and neon purples (neon and screens). The most intelligent element is the horizontal band of golden light in the center that runs through the entire image (passing through the Bodhisatta's halo and over the businessman's desk), acting as a physical and symbolic link of wisdom/truth.

Conclusion

The image captures the allegorical essence in a powerful and visually appealing way. It's a masterful representation of the idea of how human nature and its temptations remain the same, only changing the "cup" (liquor or technology) in which they are served.

Ironic but realistic story

Wine and Poison 2.0 – or: No one drinks their own product

Marco was not a hero. He was just a guy with a good dose of skepticism and a hereditary intolerance to bullshit. He worked as a freelance marketing consultant, which meant spending half of his time selling smoke and the other half wondering why no one noticed it was smoke.

One afternoon of pouring rain, he received a message on LinkedIn. It belonged to Lorenzo, a "digital entrepreneur" who had taken a course on how to become a digital entrepreneur. Lorenzo invited him to an exclusive event in the center of Milan: "Come and try our new neuro-activating energy drink. It's revolutionary. We call it Nektar Mind. First taste free, but only for a select few."

March, rain, Milan. He had nothing better to do. He accepted.

He arrived in a white and glossy loft, furnished with designer armchairs and purple fig plants. There were four guys in white shirts and pasta glasses, smiles so wide that they looked like Photoshop. On the table, a dozen blue bottles with Nektar Mind written on them in minimal letters. Next to it, a projector showed a graph rising like a rocket.

"Welcome!" Lorenzo greeted him, shaking his hand with a force inversely proportional to sincerity. "Today you will taste the future."

Marco looked at the bottles. Then he looked at the boys. Then he noticed something: each of them had a glass of plain water in front of him. No one touched the blue bottles.

"But do you drink it?" asked Marco, pointing to the Nektar Mind.

"Of course!" replied Lorenzo, without lifting a finger towards the bottle. "It's our flagship product."

"No, I'm saying now. Are you drinking it now?"

There was an embarrassed silence. A girl coughed. A boy adjusted his glasses.

"Here, Marco, you see, we are already in a state of optimal neuro-cognitive activation -" Lorenzo began.

"Ah, so you don't need it?" interrupted Marco. "Then why should I have it?"

Silence. Then another boy, the youngest, made the mistake of opening his mouth: "Well, well, the product is safe, only that... our body is already used to it, the placebo effect would be less evident...»

"Placebo?" Marco smiled. "So you're admitting that the effect is placebo?"

Lorenzo glared at him. "That's not what he wanted to say. However, if you don't want to taste, no one forces you."

"Of course no one forces me," replied Marco, getting up. "But tell me: how many of these blue bottles have you sold in the last month?"

The boys looked at each other. No one answered.

"Many?" insisted Marco. "And yet you don't drink them. Strange, isn't it? Usually, when a product is good, the seller is the first to consume it. The bread is eaten by the baker, the wine is drunk by the winemaker. But the Nektar Mind... none of you drink it. Not even to make a fool of myself."

Lorenzo opened his mouth to reply, but Marco anticipated him: "I know how it is. You have filled it with caffeine and taurine, you have attached a cool label and a price of 49 euros per bottle. But when you are home alone in the evening, you drink water or chamomile. Right?"

The silence had become grave. The girl with the glasses got up and left the room. The younger looked down.

Marco put on his coat, nodded goodbye and, as he left, launched the last barb: "For the next scam, at least, learn to act better. If you want to sell poison, you have to be willing to drink it first. Otherwise, it's just advertising. And advertising, my boys, only works on fools."

He went out in the rain. He stopped at the first bar, ordered a regular coffee and smiled. He was not a hero. But that evening, as he scrolled through LinkedIn, he thought that maybe, sometimes, not being a fool was already a form of heroism.

Fidelity to storytelling and irony

The image captures the ironic essence. The juxtaposition is beautifully rendered: the projected graph shows incredible success, while the reality in the room is made up of unease and skepticism, an "advertisement gone wrong".

The digital acting of the characters is the highlight of the image:

The four entrepreneurs: They respect the dress code (white shirts and glasses). Their expressions of embarrassment are excellent and varied: one covers his mouth (fake cough), one touches his temple for stress, another avoids the gaze.

Marco (the fifth man): It's perfect. Casual clothing and the coat in hand clearly distinguish him. His gesture of pointing at the bottles and his skeptical/amused expression create the focal point of the narrative.

Setting and Technical Details

The loft and the weather: The environment is minimalist and clean. The view out of the window captures very well the gray and rainy atmosphere of an afternoon in Milan (you can see the typical roofs).

The blue bottles: They are bright and positioned well as an unconsumed "object of desire".

The Floodlight: The rocket chart is visible and clear.

Scene 54 (Phala): The Fruit and the Mango.

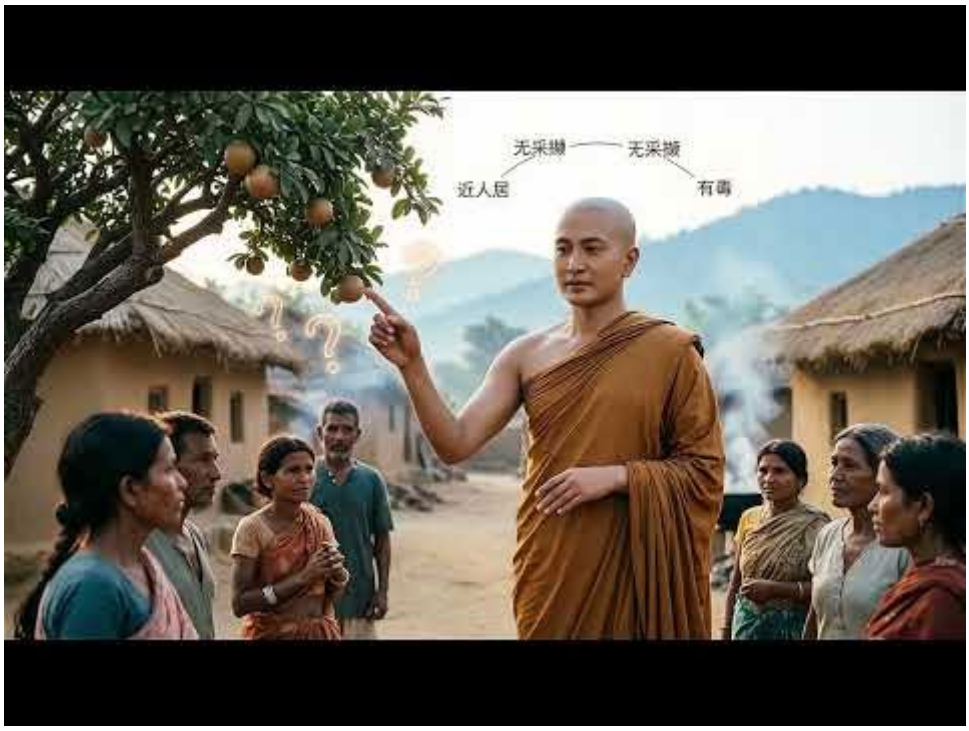
The poisoned fruit resembles the mango. Twin: superficial knowledge vs deep knowledge (tradition). Only the leader recognizes the danger because he knows the tree, not just the fruit.

Video Post

https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/phala-jataka-54-il-frutto-e-il-mango.html

https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/03/phala-jataka-54-fruit-and-mango-from.html

https://youtu.be/pcXSKXwZgzg



Introduction: The Deception That Lies in the Obvious

In the sapiential architecture of the Jātakas, the first level of learning is based on a truth that is as simple as it is often fatal: what appears rarely is. Under the title "The Veil of Truth", we explored the primordial twin between Appearance and Reality, an illusion that acts on two distinct but complementary levels: the social

one (hierarchies, roles, prejudices) and the natural one (the tangible world of signs and substances). The first two Jatakas of this cycle have dismantled the illusions woven by men; this third and final story, the Phala-Jātaka, strikes at the heart of the most dangerous illusion: that nature itself, in its immediacy, offers us the truth.

It is the story of a fruit that deceives perfectly. Not a crude imitation, but a double so accurate as to defy the most experienced senses. In this, the Jātaka does not only recount an episode of accidental intoxication, but describes the human condition in the face of a world that provides no immediate guarantees. Heroism, as we have been shown in this first level, is not here an act of force, but an act of resistance: virtue is passive, it consists in knowing how not to fall into deception, in holding back the hand and the tongue when instinct and appearance push one to consume. Scene 54 is the apex and the turning point: what is at stake is no longer just social blindness, but death itself, and the only tool to escape is a knowledge that does not stop at the surface, but has its roots in tradition, observation and reasoning.

Chapter 1: The Caravan and the Edge of the Forest

The story opens with an image of order and imminent danger. We are in the time of King Brahmadatta in Benares, and the Bodhisatta, our future Buddha, is reborn as a caravan leader, a merchant driving five hundred chariots. He is a man whose authority comes not from rank or wealth, but from knowledge and responsibility. At the edge of a great forest, the border between the known and the unknown, he gathers his people.

His speech is not a tyrannical order, but an act of protection. "Poisonous trees grow in this forest. Be careful: do not taste an unknown leaf, flower or fruit without first consulting me". The agreement is signed with a unanimous promise. This preliminary scene is crucial: it establishes the pact between intelligence (the leader) and the community. Intelligence, at this level, is not yet an offensive strategy, but a custodian. The boss does

not say what they will find, but teaches a method to face the unknown: suspend judgment, postpone immediate satisfaction, rely on superior knowledge.

Chapter 2: The "What-What" Tree and the Poison of Haste

The forest, like any place of transition, is deceptive. Just beyond the entrance, there is a village and, next to it, a fatal tree. The Pali text calls it Kimipakkha-rukkha, the tree of the "What-What" or "What-Fruit." Its nature is the perfect mimesis: trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, fruits, even the smell and taste are identical to those of the mango. It is the dark double, the copy that does not limit itself to deceiving the eye, but seduces the palate, offering a total sensory identity that conceals an instant death.

The caravan moves. Two groups of men stand in front of this tree. The former, "some greedy," are overwhelmed by the impulse. They see a mango, they believe in a mango, they act. For them, reality is what it appears. It is the error of immediate perception, unmediated by intelligence.

The second group embodies the wisdom of doubt. Although they see the same fruit, they hold their hand. "We ask the boss before eating." They stop, wait. In this pause, in this space of suspension between stimulus and action, lies the whole difference between life and death. When the Bodhisatta arrives, he does not need to taste. Its knowledge is not empirical, but contextual and traditional. He does not value the fruit, but the tree in its environment. His sentence is categorical: "This 'mango' is a tree of 'What-what'; do not touch its fruit."

His intervention, however, is twofold. It does not merely prevent, but acts with practical urgency on those who have already succumbed to temptation. With an emetic and the four sweet foods (a traditional remedy to counteract poison), he saves them. Knowledge is not only theoretical: it knows how to remedy mistakes, how to extract a chance of healing from the impending tragedy. The body that has succumbed to deception is purified and brought back to balance.

Chapter 3: The Spectators' Village and the Revelation

The next day reveals the wider stakes. The tree is not a natural accident, but a consciously exploited device of death. The neighboring villages, accustomed to finding endless caravans, rush at dawn to share the spoils: "The oxen will be ours", "to us the carts", "to us the goods". Their greed is complementary to that of the wayfarers: if the merchants have fallen into the deception of the fruit, the villagers live in the deception of a destiny that they consider inevitable. They have built an economy on the death of others, turning a poisonous tree into an infallible trap.

Their disappointment, when they find the caravan alive and well, is the moment of truth. "How did you know it wasn't a mango?" they ask, incredulous. And the answer, "We didn't know, he was our boss", enshrines the cardinal principle of this first level: salvation does not come from individual heroism, but from deference to a guide who possesses vertical knowledge, inherited and not immediate.

The question of the villagers at this point becomes deeper. They no longer ask "what", but "how". "Man of wisdom, how did you know that this tree was not a mango?" The Bodhisatta responds with a verse that is the keystone of the entire story, and perhaps of the entire first level of learning:

When a tree grows near a village

Not difficult to climb, that's clear to me,

Nor do I need further proof to know:

—Healthy fruit on it can't grow!

Chapter 4: Analysis of a Syllogism – Deep Knowledge

The Bodhisatta verse is not a mere empirical observation, but a syllogism that condenses a philosophy of knowledge. He lists two clues, which are actually two universal principles.

1. "When a tree grows near a village": this is the principle of the anthropic context. A tree that grows near a village, outside a guarded orchard, carries with it an ontological suspicion. If it were a real mango, a tree of inestimable value, it would have been cut down, transplanted, or in any case it would have become the property and care of the village. Its wild and undisturbed presence on the margins of the human community is a sign, a symptom of its nature incompatible with human life. Deep knowledge reads the landscape as a text, where the absence of expected human interaction reveals a hidden truth.

2. "Not difficult to climb": this is the principle of suspicious ease. A ripe mango tree, laden with desirable fruit, would be stripped of its lowest branches. Its accessibility is a trap. True abundance, true nourishment, often requires effort, selection, a relationship of care and effort. Nature, when it offers itself too easily, with too much mimetic-lethal generosity, is lying.

These are not sensitive data, but cultural and traditional interpretations. The knowledge of the leader is not botanical in the modern sense, but it is a situated knowledge. He does not know what the tree is because he has studied its tissues under a microscope, but because he knows the relationship between men, their settlements and plant species. His knowledge is the result of experience handed down, of a tradition that has codified the principle that "where there is too much ease and unexploited human closeness, there lies danger".

Conclusion: Level 1 to Level 2 – Intelligence That Becomes Strategy

The Phala-Jātaka concludes with the caravan continuing to safety and the leader "teaching the Truth to the assembled multitude." But its function in the structure of the Jātaka is broader. It closes Level 1, "The Veil of Truth", and acts as a perfect bridge to Level 2.

In this story, the caravan leader not only sees the truth hidden behind the appearance (the function of Level 1), but acts on two planes that anticipate the next level. On the one hand, it implements a prevention strategy (the initial warning). On the other hand, he performs a ritual and medical sacrifice (emetic and sweets) to save those who have already sinned of greed. His intelligence does not stop at the diagnosis, but becomes an intervention, transforming itself from a passive virtue (knowing how not to fall) to an active virtue (knowing how to save and lead). The first level taught how to unmask deception; the second, which will begin with the next Jātaka, will teach how to use this same intelligence to navigate the world, transforming simple survival into effective and wise action.

Relationship with contemporary culture

In an age saturated with information, with digital "fruits" that perfectly camouflage truth with lies, the Phala-Jātaka is dazzlingly topical. We live surrounded by "What-What" trees: news that resembles journalism, relationships that look like friendships, offers that look like opportunities, easy solutions that look like progress. Contemporary deception is rarely gross; it is, like the poisonous fruit, a perfect mimesis of what we desire.

The lesson of Jātaka is an antidote to the dictatorship of immediacy. Our culture celebrates haste, tasting before asking, the "it seems to me" transformed into "is". The Bodhisatta invites us to relearn the value of suspension, to ask before consuming, to look not only at the fruit (the content, the offering), but at the tree (the context, the source, the story). Its two criteria—anthropic context ("who planted this message and why is he here unguarded?") and suspicious ease ("why is this solution so accessible and appealing?") —are tools of fundamental mental hygiene.

Recognizing the tree of "What-What" in the contemporary media, political and social landscape is the act of passive heroism that is required of us: not to fall into deception, to hold our hand, and to seek that deep, often uncomfortable and complex knowledge that lies behind the sweetest and most seductive appearances. Only in this way can the human caravan, once again, prevent the poison of illusion from interrupting its journey.

Story: The Wine and the Poison

An ironic but realistic story that renews the Phala-Jātaka: "The Wine and the Poison", maintains the twin structure Appearance vs Reality and the lesson on superficial vs deep knowledge.

Wine and Poison

54. PHALA-JĀTAKA — A story of start-ups, influencers, and the forbidden fruits of the digital economy

1. The caravan of the twenty-first century

Once upon a time, and there still is, a caravan leader named Edoardo. He did not drive oxen or carts, but a strategic consulting firm with seventy employees, all under the age of thirty, all with sticky company computers and a pathological addiction to specialty coffee. His caravan was the open space of a start-up that described itself as "scalable", "disruptive" and "with a strong vertical impact on the financial services market".

Edoardo did not call himself CEO. He called himself "Guide". His employees found him old-fashioned, but they respected him because he had predicted three liquidity crises before accountants even saw the numbers. His authority was born from knowing how to read the territory, not from owning an armchair.

One Monday morning, Edward summoned the caravan to the meeting room they called the "Agora." There were very uncomfortable designer chairs, a projector that never worked and a magnetic board on which no one wrote anything.

"Listen," said Edward, closing the glass door. "In two weeks there is the Tech & Wine Summit in Rimini. The biggest networking event of the year. There are stands, pitches, tastings of fine wines, investment opportunities."

The seventy employees held their breath. Tech & Wine Summit was every start-up's wet dream: three days of contacts, champagne, potential customers wearing blue coat cuffs, and venture capital funds looking for something to burn.

"We'll go," said Edward. Then he added: "But with a rule. Do not accept anything from anyone without first showing it to me. No 'taste this wine', no 'try this platform', no 'come on, it's just a glass, what do you want it to be'. Ask me first."

There was a murmur of embarrassment. Marta, head of marketing, raised a perfectly microblading eyebrow. "Edoardo, sorry, it's a networking event. If we have to ask permission for every glass of Sauvignon..."

"The wine is not the problem," replied Edoardo. "It's what wine looks like."

No one understood, but everyone nodded. With Edoardo it was always like this: he seemed to speak in aphorisms, then three months later you found out he was right. The caravan set out. Three rental vans with the company logo, seventy people in smart casual clothing, a deserted A14 motorway and a destination: Rimini Fiera, pavilion D3, stand number 47.

2. The "What-What" tree is called WeWine

The Tech & Wine Summit was a riot of LED lights, tables set, bottles that glittered like trophies. Each booth was a small village: generative AI start-ups, decacom fintechs, food delivery scale-ups, all with the same look — guys in hoodies, girls with oversized glasses, and a different bottle of wine for each station.

Right at the entrance, there was the most striking stand. It was called WeWine.

WeWine was a start-up that promised to "revolutionize the wine experience through generative artificial intelligence". They had an app that, by photographing a glass of wine, told you tasting notes, pairings, and even "the mood of the grape variety". The founder was a twenty-four-year-old boy with a hipster beard, perfect teeth and a pitch learned by heart.

Outside the stand, a luminous sign read: "Taste the future. Try WeWine. Wine offered."

There were three bottles. They looked like Brunello. They looked like Barolo. They looked like Bolgheri. Elegant labels, tin capsules, natural corks. But the name on the label was neither Brunello nor Barolo. It was written in small print, with a font that was almost invisible: "WeWine Experience — Limited Edition".

Edward's caravan arrived en masse. The seventy dispersed through the pavilion like ants in a supermarket, attracted by the reflections of the bottles and the sound of spilled prosecco.

A first group, the youngest, those from the technical office, saw the WeWine stand and approached. "Wow, cool, an app that recognizes wine with the photo. And they even offer a drink!"

They caught the first glass. Then the second. "But it's delicious," said one. "It looks like a Sassicaia," said another. "Maybe it's a Sassicaia," said a third. No one looked at the label in full.

A second, more cautious group — the salespeople with a few years more, those who had already seen three start-ups fail — stopped halfway. They took the glasses in their hands, sniffed, but did not drink.

"Maybe it's better to wait for Edoardo," said one of them.

"But it's just a glass of wine," objected another. "What do you want it to be?"

"I don't know," replied the first. "But Edward said to ask."

3. The influencer village and the undertow of investors

While the caravan hesitated, a crowd had already formed around the WeWine stand. They were not just participants. They were there too: the regular spectators of these events.

There were the content creators with tripods, who filmed every sip as if it were an initiatory act. There were venture capital consultants with thousand-euro sneakers, who wrote on WhatsApp: "There's interesting stuff, maybe I'll throw a million into it". There were the technology journalists who already imagined the title: "WeWine: when AI meets wine, the future is born".

Everyone around the stand, everyone with a glass in hand, all convinced that they are tasting the beginning of something great.

"Tomorrow morning we open the round," said the founder of WeWine with a seraphic smile. "Already three funds have expressed interest. We are evaluating."

In reality, WeWine had neither a working product nor a business model. The app was a ChatGPT wrapper with a €9.99 subscription. The wine they offered was a mass-produced blend from a winery in Valdichiana, bought for three euros per bottle and relabeled. It was not poisonous in the chemical sense of the word. But it was in the economic sense: whoever had put money, or even just credit, would have lost his face, his savings, and perhaps his career.

But no one knew. Because no one, until that moment, had asked.

4. The arrival of the Guide and the syllogism of the parking lot

Edoardo arrived at the WeWine booth twenty minutes late, because he had been stuck in the parking lot looking for a place — the first sign, he thought to himself, that an event is overrated when the parking lot is more complicated than the contents.

He found his group divided into three:

- The ten from the technical office sitting on the ground, with glassy eyes, repeating "but it's delicious" like a mantra.

- The fifteen salesmen still with full glasses in their hands, waiting.

- The rest of the caravan dispersed between stands of cryptocurrencies and probiotic yogurts.

Edoardo approached the stand, looked at the bottles, read the label carefully, then observed the crowding around, the content creators filming, the venture capitalists writing messages, the founder with the perfect beard who laughed too loudly at his own jokes.

He took a deep breath and uttered his modern version of the Bodhisatta verse:

"When at a trade fair a product is offered too easily, and there are more influencers than customers around, and parking is paid but the wine is 'free', then, my friends, you don't have to taste to know it's poison."

The salesmen put down their glasses. The technicians, now intoxicated, were taken to the infirmary by the Red Cross (diagnosis: "marketing intoxication, no danger to life, prognosis of three days of shame").

Then Edoardo approached the founder of WeWine.

"Nice product," said Edoardo. "Too bad no one has read the label. On the label it says that the wine is produced in a municipality that has no vineyards, by a cooperative that no longer exists since 2019. And the app, have you tested it? Because I tried to photograph a glass of water and it told me 'citrus notes with hints of woodland'."

The founder stopped laughing. Venture capitalists stopped writing messages. The content creators lowered their tripods.

5. The day after: the undertow that didn't happen

The next morning, the villagers — as Edoardo called venture capitalists and influencers — showed up at the WeWine booth with metaphorical axes to divide the spoils.

One wanted the contacts. Another wanted exclusivity for the next round. A third had already prepared the press release: "WeWine closes a 2 million pre-seed".

But the stand was empty. The founder had escaped at seven in the morning with three cases of leftover wine and the company computer. The security guard at the fair said that someone had heard people say, "Someone came, a guy with glasses, who told everyone not to drink. Then he asked a question about the label. That's the end of it."

The villagers looked at each other disappointed. "How did you understand that it was not a real investment?" they asked Edoardo's salesmen.

"We didn't know," they replied. "He was our boss."

And when venture capitalists asked Edoardo how he had done it, he replied with a phrase that would become famous in strategic consulting circles:

"When a start-up offers you free wine at a trade show with paid parking, and the founder has more followers than turnover, and the app does things that technology can't do yet, and the label doesn't say where the wine is made — then you don't need to taste. You already know it's poison. But you drank anyway because you wanted to believe it."

And the caravan went home. The ten in the technical office recovered in three days, but no one made fun of them anymore: they had learned, the hard way, that even what looks perfectly like a Sassicaia can only be a three-euro blend with a nice label.

Relationship with contemporary culture

Today the "fruit that looks like the mango" is called in many ways: it is called "start-up that promises the moon with an MVP that is a Google Doc", it is called "influencer who sells training on how to become an influencer", it is called "trading course that guarantees financial independence", it is called "free wine at the fair with paid parking".

The lesson of Jātaka is more relevant than ever: deep knowledge does not lie in tasting the fruit, but in reading the tree. It's not about trying the app, it's about asking why the app exists, who made it, and why they're offering it to you without you asking.

And the caravan leader's rule — "don't taste without first asking me" — today could be translated as follows: don't trust what is offered to you too easily. Always ask who is behind it. Always ask where it came from. And if they tell you 'it's free, what do you want it to be', run away. Because the most effective poison is always the one that perfectly resembles what you want.

Level 2: The Economy of Force (Twin: Excess vs. Measure)

Brute force or greed leads to self-destruction; Wisdom lies in splitting, reducing or keeping silent.

Post blogger

https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/04/56-kancanakkhandha-jataka-loro-e-il.html

https://giuseguglioottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/04/56-kancanakkhandha-jataka-gold-and.html

https://youtu.be/wiRdTGNkMUM

Scene 56 (Kañcanakkhandha): The Gold and the Fragment.

A farmer finds a huge ingot. He cannot lift it until he shatters it. Twin: Greed vs Prudence. Intelligence is transforming an obstacle (excess wealth) into a series of manageable resources. Perfect metaphor for contemporary consumption.

Narrative and analysis of Scene 56 (Kañcanakkhandha): The Gold and the Fragment, developed in chapters with introduction and conclusion.

Introduction: The Weight of Excess

In the interweaving of ancient Jātaka stories, the Buddha not only illuminates his past lives as a Bodhisatta, but offers a timeless toolbox for the human soul. Scene 56, Kañcanakkhandha-Jātaka, is one of these: a parable that, under the apparent simplicity of a peasant and a gold bar, conceals a fundamental law of existence. The story, created to comfort a monk overwhelmed by the bulk of monastic rules, proves to be a perfect metaphor for the contemporary challenge: how to relate to excess. In an age that pushes us towards uncontrolled accumulation — of goods, information, commitments — the wisdom of the Bodhisatta teaches us that true strength does not lie in lifting an unbearable weight with a single, desperate effort, but in the intelligence of knowing how to break it down. It is the victory of prudence over greed, of strategy over brute force.

Chapter 1: The Finding and the Obstacle

A village on the edge of Benares. The sun is high and the once-inhabited ground has been reclaimed by red earth and weeds. It is there that the Bodhisatta, reborn as a simple and honest farmer, drives his plough on a day of work that seems the same as many others.

Suddenly, the ploughshare stops suddenly, with a dull thud that makes the oxen jump. The farmer curses: there must be a large root, or perhaps a buried boulder. Digging patiently, his hands encounter something solid, smooth, and unusually cold. When he finally manages to unearth the obstacle, sunlight reveals its nature. It is not a root, nor a boulder. It is a solid gold bar, as thick as a man's thigh and four cubits long.

For a moment, the man is overwhelmed. The discovery is one of those that change destiny: a buried legacy of an ancient merchant, now surfaced from the past. Joy, however, immediately collides with another, unexpected reality. At the end of the day, as the sky turns red and orange, the farmer puts down the plough and tries to carry his treasure on his shoulders.

He can't even move him.

The ingot is motionless, firmly anchored to the ground as if the earth itself refuses to let it go. The peasant sits down in front of that gold that now appears to him no longer as a blessing, but as a monument to his own impotence. Primordial greed, the dream of taking possession of everything immediately, is shattered against an undeniable physical limit. Excess wealth has become an insurmountable obstacle.

Chapter 2: The Fragment and Strategy

Sitting cross-legged in front of the bar, the farmer does not despair. Instead of allowing himself to be paralyzed by frustration, he begins an operation that is both practical and profoundly rational. He mentally divides the treasure into four parts, and assigns a precise destiny to each one.

"With this part," he thinks, "I will provide for my daily subsistence. I will bury this other one as a reserve for the future. With the third part I will start a trade, I will make the capital profitable. And the last I will dedicate to charity and good works."

In an act of lucid strategy, he transforms the cumbersome and useless unity into functional multiplicity. The farmer takes his tool and shatters the ingot into four smaller fragments. Where before there was a single block that was impossible to lift, there are now four separate weights, each within its own reach. He loads them, one after the other, on his shoulders and, with a sure step, returns to the village.

The parable ends with the image of a man who does not allow himself to be overwhelmed by greed. His prudence is not renunciation, but applied intelligence. Having wisely managed his treasure, he will spend the rest of his days in works of generosity, eventually reaping the fruits of his virtuous deeds in the cycle of rebirth.

Conclusion: The Art of the Fragment in the Age of Abundance

The story of the farmer and the gold bar is a lesson that is all the more powerful the more you observe it with contemporary eyes. The Buddha told it to teach a monk, overwhelmed by the mass of rules, that spiritual practice is not a single, colossal burden to be lifted in a heroic gesture, but a path made up of measured steps. The "three rules" (body, speech, and mind) were his "fractionation" of the vast monastic code.

Today, the metaphor resonates with an almost disturbing precision. We live in the age of the "ingot" in a thousand forms: we are bombarded with infinite information (the excess of data), pushed towards unbridled consumerism (the excess of goods), and obsessed with the idea of achieving ambitious goals in a short time (the excess of goals). The instinctive reaction, just like that of the farmer in front of gold, is often twofold: either to try to embrace everything in a single, desperate effort that leaves us exhausted and immobile, or to abandon everything in frustration at not being able to "lift" it.

The Jātaka offers us a third way, the way of wisdom: to transform the obstacle into manageable resources. It is not a question of giving up gold (value, objectives, knowledge), but of developing the strategic intelligence to fractionate it. In the economy of force, where society urges us to do more, to have more, to be more, the true sovereign force becomes the measure. Like the farmer, we must learn to sit in front of our bar, mentally divide it into four and ask ourselves: "How much do I need to live? How much for the future? How much to invest? How much to donate?"

The final message is revolutionary in its simplicity: wealth, like knowledge, like life itself, is not a monolith to be possessed, but a flow to be administered. Greed condemns us to remain motionless in front of our own treasure; prudence, on the other hand, gives us the tools to bring it home, one fragment at a time, and transform it into a bridge for our fulfillment and for the good of others. In a world that celebrates accumulation, the lesson of Jātaka 56 is a call for conscious fragmentation: the only way to truly lift the weight of our age.

Ironic tale

The ironic and realistic story transports the scene of the gold bar into our contemporaneity.

The Man Who Found an Ingot (and Put It on Instagram)

Matteo was not exactly a farmer. He was an art director on layoff who, after yet another interview gone wrong, had decided that the solution to all his problems was a small organic vegetable garden on his grandfather's land in the province of Viterbo. "I'm going back to the roots," he announced on LinkedIn, receiving 47 likes and a comment from a former colleague who asked him if he needed a consultant for the garden's communication.

That Tuesday afternoon, while digging with a spade bought on Amazon in installments, the blade hit something solid. Matteo cursed, thinking of a pipe of the Roman aqueduct. He dug with his hands, dirtying the only nails still groomed, and an object the size of a fire extinguisher, but with an unbearable weight, emerged.

It was gold.

A massive ingot, as thick as the thigh of a Serie A footballer and four spans long. Matteo remained on his knees for ten minutes, his eyes going from the ingot to the sky, from the sky to the ingot bar. A dimensional portal opened in his head: inside were a mortgage paid off, a Tesla Model 3, a trip to Japan with business upgrades, and the face of his former boss calling him back offering him creative direction with a solid wood desk.

The sunset tinged the Tiber red when Matteo decided to take home the loot. He bent down, grabbed the bar with both arms, contracted his abs as if he had returned to the gym after two years of pandemic...

And he didn't lift it an inch.

He tried again. Nothing. He got into a squat position. The ingot remained there, motionless, as if the ground were trolling it. Matteo was sweating, swearing, sweating again. The ingot did not cooperate.

He sat next to him, exhausted, and did the most natural thing in the world: he took out his cell phone and opened Instagram. He filmed the bar with a story, wrote "When life gives you a gold bar but you haven't done enough squats", and published. He received 12 hearts in the first thirty seconds.

Then, with the phone still in his hand, he began to think.

A comment from an accountant friend of his said: "Split it, dickhead. You can't lift everything at once. It's like with debts. Or as with customers. Or as with posts to write. Divide."

Matteo looked at the comment. He hated it when his accountant friend was right. But he had it.

He took a pickaxe, and with a patience he did not know he possessed, he began to shatter the ingot. It took him three hours. He made four smaller blocks, each about the size of a brick. The first he loaded onto his grandfather's Panda. The second too. The third he hid in a hole covered by a bush, after marking the coordinates on the GPS. The fourth he left where he was, just in case.

Back home, with dirty hands and a broken back, he opened an Excel file and began to make plans.

The first block would have gone for the mortgage.

The second for a deposit account, "because you never know".

The third for a small fund to invest in something sensible, perhaps a B&B in the hills.

The fourth — and here Matteo smiled — for that thing he had always been ashamed of: giving it. To an association that held graphic design courses for children from the suburbs.

In the days that followed, Matthew did not become rich. It became something rarer: it became prudent. He didn't buy the Tesla. He did not make the trip to Japan. He paid the mortgage, put away a reserve, opened a small branding business for ethical startups, and every month he donated an amount that did not change his life but to someone else.

Sometimes, in the evening, he thought about that huge ingot and how it had been there for hours, useless, too heavy even to move it. And he understood that the point was not gold. It was that greed would have nailed him to a field in the province of Viterbo forever, to sweat in front of something too big to be experienced.

Instead, he had learned the art of the fragment: cutting, reducing, distributing. Turn an obstacle into four assets.

A few months later, at a dinner with friends, someone asked him: "But how did you manage to bring home such a large ingot?"

Matteo took a sip of wine, looked at his accountant friend sitting opposite, and replied: "I didn't bring it. I smashed it. And then I brought it, one piece at a time."

The accountant friend raised his glass.

Matteo, for the first time in years, did not check Instagram to see how many likes he had taken.

Scene 59 (Bherivāda) & 60 (Saṅkhadhamana): The Drum and the Shell.

In both, the excessive player attracts thieves. Twin: Advertising vs Strategic Silence. In contemporary social media culture (the "excess of noise"), these Jātakas warn that excessive self-promotion attracts the predator.

Video post blogger

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/04/59-bherivada-60-sankhadhamana-il.html

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/04/59-bherivada-60-sankhadhamana-drum-and.html

https://youtu.be/PcttxKxs13Q

The Drum and the Shell: A Twin Jātaka on the Economy of Force

Introduction: The Resonance of a Warning

In the vast tapestry of Jātaka tales, some narratives are deliberately coupled, functioning as mirrors that reflect a unique truth from slightly different angles. Scenes 59 (Bherivāda-Jātaka) and 60 (Saṅkhadhamana-Jātaka) form just such a pair. It is the two drum rolls and the two shell blasts that conclude the second thematic level of this collection: The Economy of Force (Excess vs Measure). On the surface, they appear as simple cautionary tales about a father and son who lose their hard-earned money to thieves in the forest. Yet, beneath this simplicity of a folk tale lies a profound strategic wisdom. They warn that, in a world populated by predators – be they literal bandits or the figurative "ogres" of the next level – strength, skill and wealth are not protected by their ostentation, but by their prudent dissimulation. These ancient stories speak directly to the "noise excess" of contemporary culture, where obsessive exposure on social media, incessant self-promotion, and the inability to recognize when silence is strategic often attract the very predators – trolls, exploiters, or competitors – that one would like to avoid.

Chapter 1: The Drum Hybrids (Bherivāda-Jātaka)

The first story introduces a drummer, the Bodhisatta, and his son, stubborn and obstinate. They leave their village to travel to the large city of Benares during a public festival, where their father's skill allows them to earn a considerable sum. The return journey, however, requires you to cross a dangerous forest, infested with brigands. The father, wise in the ways of the world, understands the principle of strategic silence. He orders his son, "Don't do that, just beat from time to time, as if some great gentleman were passing by."

His logic is irreproachable. The intermittent roll of a drum suggests a powerful escorted procession – a gentleman whose presence commands respect and fear. It is a bluff, a form of psychological warfare that exploits the very caution of thieves. The son, however, trades the volume for safety. Believing that a continuous and deafening noise can better frighten the brigands, he beats the drum non-stop.

At first, the strategy seems to work; Thieves flee at the first shots. But the incessant noise reveals its true nature. It is not the firm and disciplined march of a powerful convoy, but the frantic and monotonous clang of a single fool. The thieves, recognizing the bluff, return, beat the two and rob them of everything. The Bodhisatta's lament, contained in the only stanza of the story, encapsulates the fundamental lesson: "Don't go too far, learn to flee from excess; / Because of the overload of the drum, what the drum had gained was lost."

The son's mistake is one of excess. It trades the quantity of force (the noise) for its quality (the strategic implication). His stubbornness overrides wisdom, turning a tool of celebration and gain into a beacon for predators.

Chapter 2: The Echo of the Shell (Saṅkhadhamana-Jātaka)

The second story is a deliberate structural echo, a variation on the theme. Here, the Bodhisatta is a conch player who, along with his father, earns money at the same festival in Benares. The roles, however, are subtly reversed. This time it is the son (the Bodhisatta) who possesses wisdom, while the father is the stubborn fool.

The situation is identical: the forest, the threat of brigands, and the warning against excessive noise. The son warns his father not to continue playing the shell continuously. But the old man, confident in his own wrong reasoning, believes that continuous sound will keep thieves away. It sounds "loud without a moment's pause". The result is the same as the previous story. The thieves, initially frightened, recognize the lack of strategic purpose behind the noise, return and rob them.

The concluding stanza is an almost identical repetition, adapted only to the instrument: "Don't go too far, learn to flee from excess; / Because of the overload of the shell, what the shell had gained was lost."

This twin narrative reinforces the universality of the lesson. Madness is not confined to youth or old age; It is a universal human tendency to resort to brute force or flashy display when subtlety would be required. Swapping the roles between the wise and the foolish, the Jātaka emphasizes that the principle of strategic silence transcends age and is a matter of character and intelligence, not seniority.

Chapter 3: The Twin as the Only Lesson: Advertising vs Strategic Silence

When read together, the Drum and the Shell form a powerful diptych. Their structural similarities – the party, the gains, the forest, the warning, the disobedience, the robbery – create a rhythm that carves the moral in the mind. They are two sides of the same coin, illustrating a singular concept: the distinction between Advertising (excessive self-promotion) and Strategic Silence (measured and intelligent presence).

The thieves in both stories are not just simple criminals; They are information-tuned predators. They interpret sound quality as a given. An intermittent drum or shell signals power and organized protection. Continuous, monotonous noise signals vulnerability and lack of control. In the "Economy of Force," the lesson is that strength is not an absolute value. A small force, applied with intelligence and restraint (the bluff), can be more effective than a large force applied without strategy. Wisdom, as stated in the Level 2 chart, lies in "fractionating, reducing or being silent". In both accounts, the Bodhisatta advocates a reduction in noise (the measure), which would have functioned as a "fractionation" in the perception of predators – creating the illusion of a greater and more dispersed force.

Chapter 4: Contemporary Resonance: The Predator in the Feed

The warning of these twin Jātakas is surprisingly prophetic for the age of social media. Today's "forest" is the digital public square; The "thieves" are the predators of attention: trolls, scammers, crowds of cancel culture, exploitative algorithms and even competitors ready to copy or weaken.

Contemporary social media culture is built on the imperative of excessive noise. The algorithm rewards constant posting, aggressive self-promotion, and amplifying one's achievements. It is the digital equivalent of the son beating the drum or the father playing the conch shell non-stop. The underlying assumption is that more noise equals more safety, more influence, and more success.

The Jātaka warns just the opposite. Just as the incessant drumming revealed the vulnerability of wayfarers, constant online self-promotion reveals its cards. It signals to "predators" where to strike. It exposes the lack of a support system (the "great lord" behind the traveler), showcases one's possessions to arouse envy and exploitation, and creates a digital trail of one's movements and insecurities.

The two twin stories support a forgotten art: strategic silence. The intermittent drum roll – publishing with a purpose, not compulsion; share selectively; cultivating a reputation for substance rather than constant visibility – creates a bluff in turn. It suggests that you are not desperate for attention, that you are part of a larger and more meaningful context, and that you are not an easy target. In an attention economy, the ability to remain silent, to know when not to publish, is a form of power. It is the wisdom of "fractionating, reducing or silence" applied to the contemporary self.

Conclusion: The Silence That Precedes the Ogre

The twin Jatakas of the Drum and the Shell serve as the perfect crowning achievement for Level 2: The Economy of Force. They distill the fundamental teaching of this level – that brute force and greed lead to self-destruction – into a twofold and memorable parable. The stubborn son and the stubborn father destroy their prosperity not through weakness, but through a misapplication of their strength. Their greed for recognition or their mistaken belief in the primacy of the volume leads them to ruin. Wisdom, embodied by the Bodhisatta in both stories, lies in the measure, moderation, and strategic use of silence.

This lesson is not an end in itself, but is a crucial preparation for Level 3: Overcoming the Ogre (Body vs Mind). The "predators" in these stories are not yet the superhuman ogres of the next level; they are common brigands. But the principle established here – that the intelligence of the mind (strategic silence) must dominate the impulse of the body (the urge to make noise) – is the very foundation for facing a more formidable enemy. If you cannot exercise restraint and strategy against ordinary thieves, you cannot hope to defeat a real ogro. Thus, the Drum and the Shell do not limit themselves to concluding a chapter; They set the tone for the next, reminding us that before we can defeat the external monsters, we must first master the inner impulse to make ourselves an easy target. In a world that incessantly demands our noise, these ancient twins whisper a truth against the tide: true strength often sounds like silence.

Ironic story: The Juicer and the Tiktoker

Marco had a dream: to become famous. Not just any celebrity, but the one who posts everything, who documents every breath, who transforms his breakfast into an event worthy of a live streaming.

His instrument was not a drum or a shell, but a very high-speed blender that he used for his "immersive" cooking videos. Every day, at 7:00, 13:00 and 19:00, his followers heard the roar of the centrifuge-chef, while Marco blended spinach, ginger and oranges with the conviction of someone who is composing the Ninth Symphony.

"This way I keep the predators of the algorithm away," he told his sister Chiara, who worked in a small independent bookstore and, according to Marco, "didn't understand anything about marketing."

Chiara, in reality, understood very well. He understood that his brother had just published his new home address in a story, along with a photo of the package he had just delivered containing the "Polar Storm" model blender, worth 1,200 euros. He understood that his brother posted every move, every time, every moment when the house remained empty.

"Marco, maybe you should... I don't know, post less? As if I had a commitment, a presence? Maybe it suggests that you are not always alone?"

"Shut up you and your small craftsman mentality. The secret is consistency. The algorithm rewards those who never stop. We need to make noise. Noise. NOISE!"

And so Marco continued to blend. He whipped his dinner. He whipped his breakfast. She also whipped a detox smoothie live at 3:17 a.m., with her eyes circled and her quiff in the air, explaining to her 1,200 followers that "consistency is everything, guys, consistency!"

Followers increased. And with them, the attention of some anonymous profiles also increased, who discreetly liked and saved all the stories at the exact time.

One evening, Marco came home after a networking event (obviously told live, obviously with geolocation active) and found the door ajar.

The "Polar Storm" blender was no longer there. Neither the computer, nor the camera, nor the new iPhone with which he recorded his culinary masterpieces. Disappeared.

On the kitchen counter, next to a package of wilted spinach, the thieves had left a piece of paper folded in four. Marco opened it with a trembling hand. It was written, in uncertain but polite handwriting:

"Thank you for the schedule. Keep up the good work, the noise is great for business."

Marco stood looking at the emptiness on the shelf, where the blender had hummed happily only a few hours before. Chiara, warned, arrived half an hour later. She found him sitting on the ground, with his back against the fridge, staring at the exact spot where the Polar Storm had once risen.

"I told you so," murmured Chiara, without malice, almost with pity.

Marco looked up. "But I... I had 1,500 followers."

"Now you have 1,498," said Chiara looking at the phone. "The other two were the thieves. They were used for your upgrades."

From that day, Marco didn't post anything for three weeks. When he returned, he posted a single video: a dusty toy plastic blender on a black background. No captions. No audio. Only silence.

It had 50,000 views in one day.

The comments said: "Finally something true". "This is art". "He understood everything".

Marco turned on the microwave and prepared a frozen pizza in silence. He did not document it. And it was the best pizza of his life.

Level 3: The Overcoming of the Ogre (Twin: Body vs Mind)

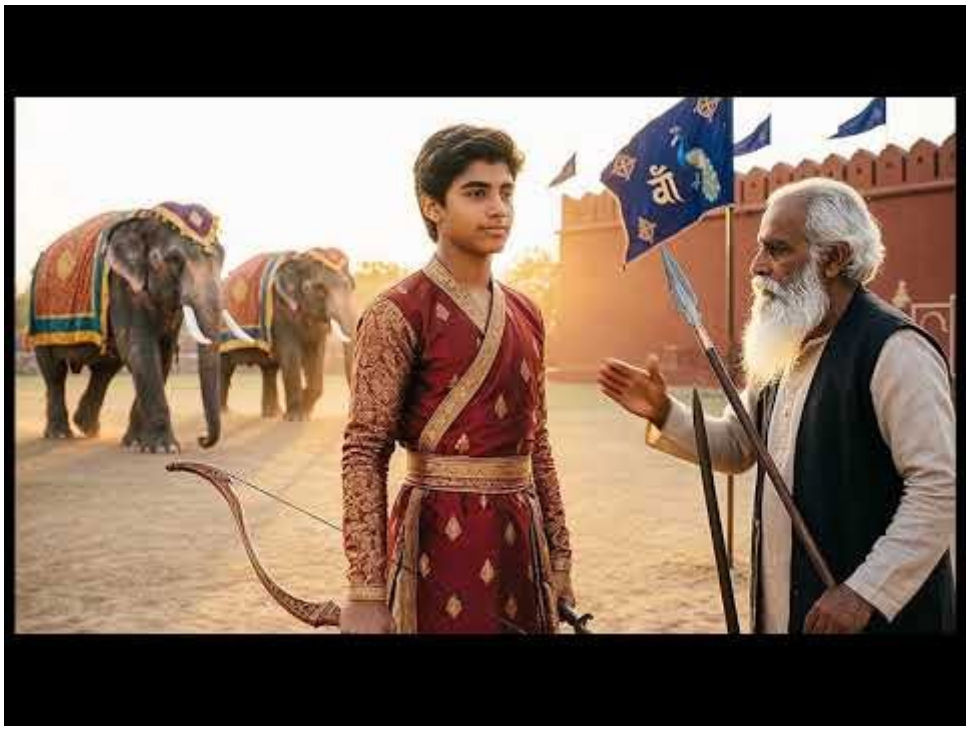
Here we get to the heart of the psychomachy. The enemy is no longer human, but monstrous (ogres, crocodiles). The victory is not physical, but psychological.

Video post blogger

https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/04/55-pancavudha-jataka-il-principe-e.html

https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/04/55-pancavudha-jataka-prince-and-hairy.html

https://youtu.be/2V-WV7Z-iDA



Scene 55 (Pañcāvudha - Five-Arms Prince): The Prince is Hairy.

The prince has five weapons (body), but when they fail, he wins thanks to the absence of fear (courage). Twin: Technology vs Spirit. Hairy (the Ogre) keeps the prey only if it is afraid. In the contemporary world, it is fear that makes us prisoners of power structures.

Essay: Jātaka 49-60 "The Axis of Intelligence: From Sacrifice to Strategy"

Level 3: The Overcoming of the Ogre (Twin: Body vs Mind)

Scene 55: The Prince and Furry

"When no attachment hinders heart or mind"

Introduction to Level 3

In the initiatory path of the Jātaka, the third level marks the passage from the conflict with a human enemy to one with a monstrous, archetypal force: the Ogre, the crocodile, the predator of the unconscious. Here social cunning or tribal loyalty are no longer enough. What is put to the test is the twin relationship between Body (weapons, technology, physical strength) and Mind (courage, strategic intelligence, presence of mind). Victory is no longer physical but psychological: you win not by killing the monster, but by defusing its real weapon — fear. In this context, the Pañcāvudha-Jātaka (No. 55) is a masterpiece of psychomachy.

Chapter 1: The Hero and the Five Weapons

The Bodhisatta is reborn as the prince of Benares, son of King Brahmadatta. At birth, eight hundred Brahmins predict a glorious destiny: he will be an invincible king, equipped with five weapons — hence the name: Five-Armed Prince (Pañcāvudha). At the age of sixteen, his father sent him to Takkasilā, the mythical university of ancient Gandhara, to complete his education. The master gives him five weapons: bow, sword, spear, club and, implicitly, his own body and will.

On the way back, the prince comes to a cursed forest. The wayfarers implore him: "Do not enter. Here lives an Ogre called Hairy (Lomaṃsa). He kills everyone he meets." But the prince, like a lion, continues.

Twin Comment (Body vs Mind – first movement): The five weapons represent technology, physical strength, body extension. They are the best that material culture can offer. Yet, as we will see, they all fail. The prince is not reckless: he knows of the danger, but trusts not only in weapons, but in himself. This is the first act of psychomachy: external equipment is necessary but insufficient.

Chapter 2: The Failure of Technology

In the clearing, the Ogre appears: tall as a palm tree, head like a pavilion, eyes like bowls, fangs like turnips, vulture's claws, belly mottled with purple. The prince does not flee. Shoot the first poisoned arrow. It sticks itself in the shaggy fur of the Ogre without hurting it. He throws the second, the third... fifty arrows. All of them hang from the mantle like needles in a pillow. The Ogre shakes them off. Then the prince draws his sword (33 inches): it also sticks. The spear: it sticks in. The club: it sticks. Nothing.

At this point, the hero has exhausted his arsenal. But not his courage.

Twin Comment (Technology vs Spirit): In the contemporary world, we live the opposite illusion: we believe that more weapons — understood as tools, devices, technical skills, firepower or economic power — make us invincible. The Jātaka exposes this lie. In the face of monstrous power structures (an oppressive system, a psychological dependency, a violent institution), technology alone is not enough. The fifty arrows are our CVs, our titles, our gadgets, our strategic plans. The Ogre absorbs them without even realizing it.

Chapter 3: The Prison of Fur and the Ogre Surprise

Now the prince does what no survival manual would suggest: he strikes the Ogre with his bare hands. The right fist sticks to the hair. The left foot attacks. The right foot, the left are attached. Finally, with an almost comical gesture if it were not tragic, he hits with the head. That too sticks. The prince remains suspended at the Ogre, trapped in a prison of hair, like a fly in pitch.

The ogre, accustomed to seeing his victims beg or faint, is amazed: "This man does not tremble. He is not afraid. Why?" It is the first time this has happened. The monster, despite having the hero's body in his hand, hesitates.

Twin Comment (Fear vs Freedom): The Hairy Ogre (Lomaṃsa) does not kill by brute force. He kills because his victim is afraid. Fear is the mechanism of capture. As long as the traveler fears, the Ogre can devour him. But if the fear disappears, the spell is broken. This is the heart of psychomachia: the monster is not in the woods, but in the mind. In the contemporary world, the structures of power — media, economic, political — keep us prisoners because we are afraid. Fear of losing one's job, of being excluded, of dying, of not being up to it. Take away the fear, and the monstrous power dissolves.

Chapter 4: The Diamond Sword Within

The Ogre asks, "How come you're not afraid of death?" The prince replies: "Every life has its death. Also, inside my body is a diamond sword. If you eat me, you won't digest it. It will rip your bowels. My death will be yours too."

The text comments: "By this, the Bodhisatta meant the Sword of Knowledge (paññāsattha), which was within him."

The Ogre, terrified of dying, lets the prince go. He frees him by saying: "You are a lion among men. Come out of my hand like the moon out of the jaws of Rahu."

Twin Comment (Body vs Mind – Resolution): The five weapons of the body have failed. But there is a sixth, invisible weapon: lucid knowledge, presence of mind, the absence of attachment to one's own survival. It is not a physical weapon. It is an ontological weapon: the awareness that death is inevitable, and that therefore the fear of it is vain. In psychomachy, the hero wins not because he is stronger, but because he has stopped being blackmailable. The Ogre, who lives on fear of others, becomes vulnerable to those who do not fear.

Chapter 5: The Conversion of the Monster

At this point, the prince does not flee. He has won, but he makes an unexpected gesture: instead of running away, he teaches the Ogre. He explains the law of kamma: "You were born an ogre because of your past sins. If you keep killing, you will go from darkness to darkness." He lists the five bad paths (killing, stealing, committing adultery, lying, drinking intoxicants) and the five good precepts. The ogre, moved and converted, promises not to kill again. The prince appoints him deva of the forest, with the right to collect tribute, but not lives.

Then he sets off again, leaves the forest and returns to Benares, where he will become a righteous king.

Contemporary Comment: The ogre's true overcoming is not physical killing — because the monster, in a sense, is also a part of the world that needs to be transformed, not annihilated. In the culture of cancellation and all-out war, the Jātaka proposes a higher strategy: to convert the enemy by defusing his fear and offering him an ethical way out. It is not naïve pacifism: it is psychological realism. A power that is based on fear, if fear is removed, it collapses on its own. At that point, it can be rebuilt.

Conclusion: The Axis of Intelligence

The Pañcāvudha-Jātaka is not a children's fairy tale. It is a treatise on the nature of power and freedom. The twin principle of Body vs Mind is resolved in an unexpected synthesis: it is not the mind that wins over the body, nor the body that wins over the mind. It is strategic intelligence — the absence of fear — that transforms physical defeat into moral victory. The five weapons fail, but their failure is not a defeat: it is the condition for discovering the sixth weapon, the one that cannot be stuck in the ogre's hair because it is not made of matter.

In contemporary culture, we are surrounded by "furry ogres": algorithms that feed us fears to keep us online, economies of scarcity that keep us anxious, apocalyptic narratives that paralyze action. The story tells us: do not try to destroy the monster with its own weapons. It doesn't work. Instead, stop being afraid. Your fearlessness is the diamond sword. And when the monster lets you go, don't humiliate him: teach him the five precepts.

As the Buddha's final verse says:

When no attachment gets in the way of heart or mind,

when righteousness is practiced to obtain peace,

he who walks in this way obtains victory

and all ties destroy completely.

This is the axis of intelligence: no longer a sacrifice to fear, but a strategy of freedom.

Ironic tale

The Prince and the Furry Manager

That is: how five strategic weapons failed in the face of a KPI

The Five-Arms Prince, fresh from his MBA at Takkasilà Business School (with a specialization in Disruptive Leadership), returned to Benares to take his father's place. In his backpack: five certified tools — recurve bow (2025 model), Damascus steel sword, telescopic spear, kinetic-winding club, and, of course, an iPhone with the "Courage 4.0" app.

The Peloso Forest was not marked on Google Maps. No signs. Just a warning on LinkedIn: "Warning: here in the ogre eats your productivity."

"Don't go in," said an old man with a long beard and a Ryanair trolley. "That ogre is called Hairy-Grip. It blocks your career. It asks you for KPIs every hour. And if you're afraid, it does the performance review.

"I have five weapons," replied the prince, activating airplane mode.

He entered.

The ogre was impressive: as tall as a suburban skyscraper, hairs like non-compliant electrical cables, two tusks of a consultant expert in synergies, and a badge with the words "Senior Manager of Transversal Fears".

"Stand there," said the ogre. "You are mine.

The prince shot the first arrow: a pitch deck of 50 slides. It stuck in the hair. The second: a five-year strategic plan. He stuck in. The third: a SWOT analysis. He stuck in. He threw the sword: an ISO 9001 certification. He stuck in. The launch: a Masterclass subscription. He stuck in. The club: a corporate mindfulness course. He stuck in.

The ogre shook everything off as if they were sheets of blotting paper.

"Beginner's stuff," he yawned. "I eat counselors for breakfast."

At this point, the prince, desperate, began to strike with his bare hands. Right: A motivational post on Instagram. Left: A thread about X ("Here are 10 things I learned by failing"). Right foot: a reel with trendy dance. Left Foot: A weekly newsletter. Header: A Zoom call with the mentor.

Everything stuck to the shaggy fur of the ogre. The prince hung over, dangling like a badly assembled IKEA chandelier.

The ogre looked at him, amazed.

"But you—" Aren't you afraid? he asked. — Candidates usually cry at this point, ask for a raise, or write a negative review on Glassdoor.

The prince smiled. He didn't tremble. He didn't sweat. He didn't even try to open LinkedIn to update his status.

"Listen, Hairy," he said calmly. "I have a diamond sword inside me. You can't find it in your HR handbook. It is the awareness that sooner or later, I will die. So do you. And that therefore your main weapon — fear — does not work on me. I don't care if you eat me. I don't care if my CV hangs on your fur. I don't care about the next round of funding.

The ogre turned pale (as pale as an ogre can be). No one had ever spoken to him like that. No one had ever told him that he was not afraid.

"You're mad," he murmured.

"I am free," replied the prince.

The ogre, suddenly terrified by the prospect of swallowing a man without fear (it would hurt his liver, if nothing else), let him go.

"Go away," he said. "You're too dangerous.

The prince not only left. Before leaving the forest, he opened a short coaching session:

"Listen, Hairy." You were born a manager because you accumulated too many useless meetings in the past. But you can change. Stop eating people. Stop asking for KPIs. Stop believing that fear is a strategy. And maybe get a shave. It will make you look more human.

The ogre, incredibly, listened to him. From that day on he became the guardian of the forest, collecting only symbolic tributes (coffee and biscuits) and never killing anyone again.

The prince returned to Benares, never opened a PowerPoint again, and reigned righteously. When the ministers asked him, "Your Majesty, what is your secret?" he answered:

"The five weapons are of little use. The only thing that matters is having nothing to lose.

Moral of the story: in contemporary culture, we are all hanging on the fur of some ogre — the boss, the algorithm, the performance anxiety, the mortgage, the like. But if you stop being afraid, the ogre melts like an ice cube in the sun. Or at least, he lets you go. Because those who are not afraid are not blackmailable. And those who are not blackmailable, always win.

Scene 57 (Vānarinda) & 58 (Tayodhamma): The Monkey and the Crocodile.

In both, the monkey (symbol of agile intelligence) surpasses the aquatic predator (the heavy force, the unconscious). Twin: Instinct vs Dialectical Reason.

- 57: "Do you have my heart? It was in the tree." (The rhetorical deception).
- 58: The monkey survives the test of water (sexuality/danger) through the presence of spirito.post

Video Blogger

https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/04/jataka-57-vanarinda-58-tayodhamma-la.html

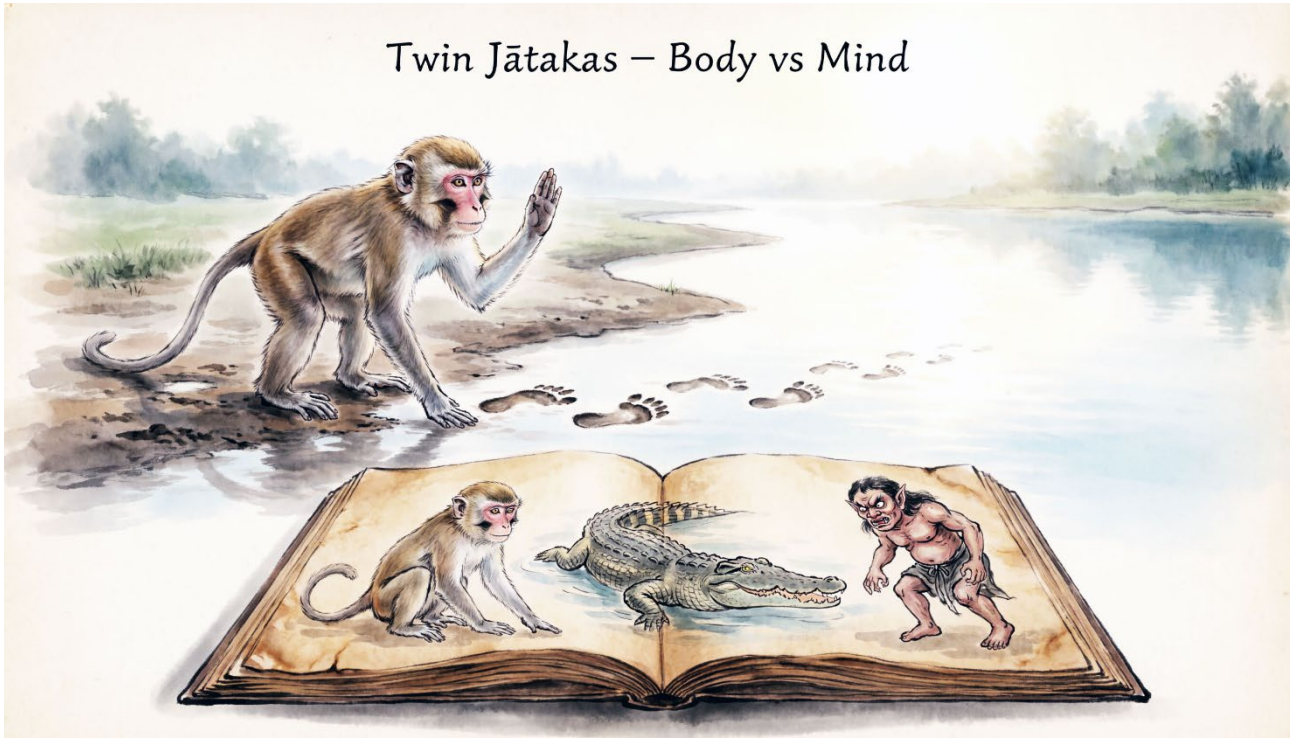
https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/04/jataka-57-vanarinda-58-tayodhamma.html

https://youtu.be/REZND1e_SQA

Twin Tale: The Monkey and the Crocodile

(Jātaka 57: Vānarinda and Jātaka 58: Tayodhamma)

Introduction to the two stories



In Jātaka 57 and 58, the Bodhisatta takes the form of a monkey. Not just any ape, but a being endowed with situational intelligence, presence of mind and strategic ability. These two stories are twins not only because they share the animal protagonist and the aquatic antagonist (crocodile in one, ogre in a lake in the other), but because they both stage the same fundamental conflict: the brute force of the unconscious or predatory instinct against the agility of the conscious mind.

In the first (Vānarinda), the danger comes from below: a crocodile hidden under the surface of the water. In the second (Tayodhamma), the danger is just as aquatic but more subtle: a seemingly harmless lake, whose tracks on the shores reveal a disturbing truth (everyone enters, no one leaves). In both cases, the monkey wins without fighting, without shedding blood, and without ever coming into direct contact with the enemy in his element. This is the lesson of Level 3: overcoming the ogre does not require physical strength, but the twin virtue of Body vs Mind, where the Mind wins because the Body learns not to expose itself.

Chapter One: The Silence of the Rock (Jātaka 57 – Vānarinda)

The essential plot

On the Ganges River, a large mango tree stands on a fruit-bearing island. A monkey-king (the Bodhisatta) reaches it every day by jumping from the shore to a central rock, and from the rock to the island. A crocodile, at the request of his pregnant wife who wishes to eat the monkey's heart, hides on the rock. The monkey, noticing that the rock seems higher than usual (because the crocodile is on it), addresses her: "Hey, rock! Why don't you answer?" The crocodile, thinking that the rock is wont to answer, says, "Yes, monkey, tell me." The monkey then understands the deception, pretends to give up and says: "Open your mouth, I'll take the jump." The crocodile opens its jaws – and its eyes close (as it really does in crocodiles). The monkey jumps on the crocodile's head and from there on the shore, he saves.

Analytic commentary: rhetorical deception as a weapon

This Jātaka is a masterpiece of applied psychology. The monkey does not win by chance: he wins because he observes, compares, deduces and then acts. The cognitive sequence is perfect:

1. Observation of the norm: every day the rock emerges from the water at the same height.

2. Anomaly detection: today the rock is higher.

3. Hypothesis: There may be a predator on top.

4. Test (genius): call the rock. A rock does not respond. The crocodile, falling into the misunderstanding, responds.

5. Countermeasure: not flight, but dialogue. The monkey does not run away – it cannot, because the path is the same. Create a verbal trap: "Open your mouth."

6. Exploitation of a biological constraint: the crocodile closes its eyes when it opens its mouth.

7. Jump not on the target, but on the enemy himself: the monkey does not jump into the water, he jumps on the head of the crocodile.

This is dialectical reason in its purest form. The ogre (crocodile) represents the heavy instinct, the unconscious that acts out of hunger, desire, reproduction. The monkey represents the mind that does not reject instinct but circumvents it. The moral of the crocodile itself, which recites the final verse, is surprising: the predator recognizes the intellectual superiority of the prey. In contemporary culture, how many "crocodiles" – predatory managers, bullies, institutional powers – are defeated not by force but by a wit that forces them to reveal themselves?

Twin virtues in action: Body (the physically vulnerable monkey) vs Mind (the monkey that turns the body into leverage – jumps not far, but on the enemy). The mind does not deny the body: it uses it better.

Chapter Two: The Lake That Did Not Return Its Footprints (Jātaka 58 – Tayodhamma)

The essential plot

An old monkey-king, terrified that his sons will dethrone him, castrates them with his teeth. The Bodhisatta's mother runs away and gives birth in secret. The son grows up very strong and wants to meet his father. His mother warns him, but he insists. The father, unable to kill him with a hug (the son is stronger), sends him to pick lotus flowers in a nearby lake, knowing that an ogre lives in the lake that devours anyone who enters it. The monkey approaches, observes the tracks: all go towards the water, none go back. He understands the deception. Then, without ever entering the water, he takes the run-up, jumps from one bank to the other, picking flowers on the fly. The ogre, amazed, comes out of the water, praises the monkey and offers to bring the flowers. The old father, seeing the scene from afar, dies of a broken heart (his heart breaks into seven pieces). The monkey becomes king.

Analytic commentary: intelligence as survival of betrayal

This Jataka is darker than the previous one. Here the enemy is not an external predator, but the father himself. The theme is the original betrayal: the generation that fears the new generation and tries to eliminate it. The ogre in the lake is not the real monster – it is just a tool. The real monster is the fear of the father.

The monkey demonstrates three qualities, which the ogre himself enumerates:

- Physical ability: jump exactly where you need it.

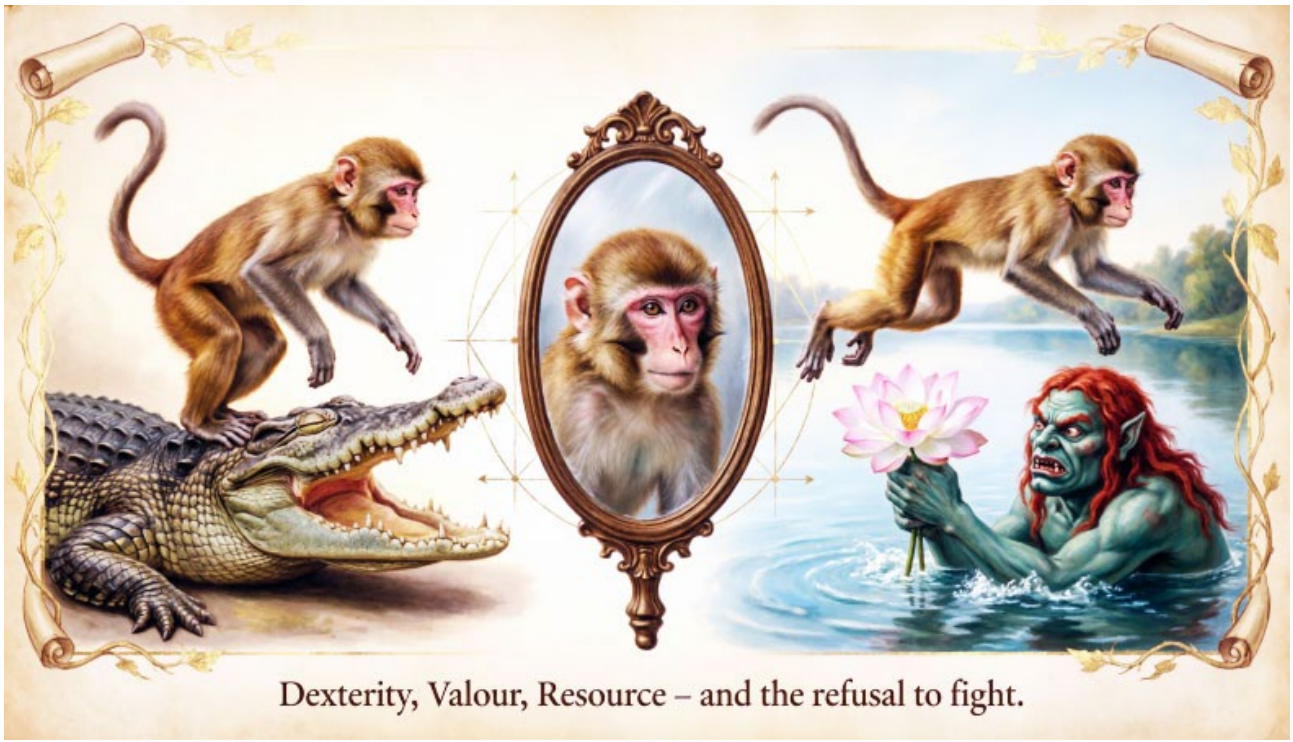
- courage: he does not flee, but faces the test.

- resource, ingenuity: understands tracks, does not enter the water.

But there is a fourth, implicit quality: the ability not to take revenge. The monkey does not kill the father. The father dies alone, out of his own fear. This is the transition to Level 4 (Power vs Forgiveness). The monkey wins without violence, or rather: it wins thanks to non-violence. If he attacked his father, he would become like him. Instead, he just survives and shows his innocence.

Twin virtue in action: Body (the monkey jumps) vs Mind (the monkey understands tracks). But also: Survival instinct (wanting to live) vs Ethical intelligence (not killing the father). The lake is the place of the collective unconscious, where death desires hide beneath the surface of family traditions.

Chapter Three: The Two Jātakas Compared – The Mirror of Intelligence



Item	Jātaka 57 (Vānarinda)	Jātaka 58 (Tayodhamma)
Enemy	Crocodile (exterior)	Father + ogre (internal/external)
Danger	Water, bite	Water, family deception
Enemy's Tool	Physical strength, concealment	Treason, sending to certain death
Monkey Capacity	Observation, testing, rhetorical deception	Track reading, calculated jump
Outcome	Escape, recognition from the enemy	Death of his father by shame, accession to the throne
Virtues that emerged	Truth (recognizing deception), Foresight, Resolve, Fearlessness	Dexterity, Courage, Ingenuity
Transition to Level 4	The monkey does not kill the crocodile	The monkey does not kill the father

Both stories teach that intelligence is the highest form of non-violence. The monkey never fights. It doesn't get into the water, it doesn't get its hands dirty. Water is the realm of the other. To remain on dry land (the rock, the shore) means to remain in one's own element: reason.

In contemporary culture, we are constantly invited to "get into the water" – in controversies, in wars of opinion, in open conflicts. Jātaka 57 and 58 suggest the opposite: observe the tracks, do not respond to the rock if you do not know who is underneath, and when you have to jump, jump on the head of the problem, not inside it.

Conclusion: Bridge to Level 4 – The Sovereignty of Non-Violence (Power vs Forgiveness)

The monkey of the Jātaka 58 becomes king. But how will he reign? The lyrics don't say it, but the message is clear: not like his father. The old king ruled by fear and mutilation. The new king rules with intelligence and the ability not to kill those who have betrayed him. This is true sovereignty.

Level 4, announced by the title of our essay, is that of the Jātaka in which the Bodhisatta is a king, a prince or a counselor who chooses forgiveness instead of revenge, the renunciation of power instead of its abuse. Jātaka 57 and 58 prepare the ground: the monkey learns not to enter the water. The king of Level 4 learns not to enter into the logic of violence, even when he has the right to do so.

In the age of social media, cancel culture, summary justice, these twin tales remind us that intelligence is not only about solving problems, but also about choosing which problems are not worth our leap. The crocodile and his father cheat. The monkey does not destroy them. He lets them live with his own defeat. This is the highest lesson: sometimes, victory is about not needing to win.

And they flee not because they are being pursued, but because they recognize that they no longer have power over you.

Ironic story: The Monkey and the Crocodile 2.0

Two twin Jātakas in the age of Zoom meetings and predatory managers

Jātaka 57 (Vānarinda) – The Silence of the Rock

Actualization: The consultant and his boss

Mario is an IT consultant. Work remotely. Every morning he jumps from his chair (shore) to the company server (rock), and from the server to the island of sensitive data (the island of mangoes). One day his boss, Aldo, a former salesman with a crocodile face and an empty stomach, decides to frame him. Aldo wants his "heart" – that is, the master password that Mario refuses to share.

Aldo hides in a meeting called at the last minute. "Mario, at 18:00 a quick call. Just the two of us."

Mario notices that the meeting agenda is anomalous: usually the 18:00 meeting is short, but today the Teams link is already active at 17:55. Too soon. The rock is higher than usual.

"Hey, Teams," Mario writes in chat. "Why are you already on?"

The boss, who forgot to turn off notifications, replies, "I'm here, Mario."

"Ah, it's you, Aldo. What do you want?"

"The password. Open your mouth – I mean, open access to me."

Mario sighs. He knows that crocodiles, when they open their mouths, close their eyes. That is: when a boss asks for a password urgently, they're not looking at GDPR compliance.

"Okay," Mario writes. "I'll prepare the link. Open your share window."

Aldo opens the screen share – and immediately his personal desktop appears, with the "Spese_2019_false" folder clearly visible.

Mario takes a screenshot. Then he closes the meeting. The next day he sends everything to the legal department. Aldo is fired.

Actualized moral: When the predator opens its mouth to eat you, you jump on its head – and document everything.

Jātaka 58 (Tayodhamma) – The lake that did not return its footprints

Actualization: The Legacy and the Founding Father

Beppe is 45 years old. His father, founder of a medium-sized components company, has always been afraid that his sons would steal his throne. He never emasculated them physically, but turned them into external consultants with no real power. His father has a personal "lake": the Catania branch, historically at a loss, where he sent three managers to die before Beppe. The footprints can be seen: everyone enters, no one leaves with a promotion.

"Beppe, go and fix the Catania branch. I'm waiting for you with lotus flowers – I mean, with the balance sheet in profit within six months."

Beppe studies the traces. He discovers that the "monster" is not the market, but his father himself, who has inflated the costs of the branch to bankrupt anyone who challenged him. Beppe does not enter the lake. He works remotely, with a tablet and a disloyal but good accountant. Find the cracks. He discovers that his father has registered half of the losses in the name of a ghost company.

Jump. He doesn't even try by force. He sends a PEC to his father with the documentation, and a copy to the auditors.

The father, seeing his son return from the lake with the flowers (the documents) and with the ogre (the auditor) bringing him the bag, has a symbolic heart attack: his "heart breaks into seven pieces" – that is, he sells everything and retires to the Maldives.

Beppe becomes CEO. The first thing you do? It removes the PEC box from all managers. He says: "From today we talk. No traps are set."

Updated moral: The ogre lake still exists. It's called "office in another city". The only way not to drown is to jump on, not inside.

Ironic conclusion

Dear LinkedIn crocodiles, dear founding fathers who eat their children for breakfast: the monkey doesn't hate you. He doesn't even want you dead. She just wants you distracted while she takes the screenshot. In contemporary culture, water is no longer the sacred river of the Ganges: it is the continuous flow of meetings, emails, promises, kind blackmail. The rock is a notification. Mango Island is that project you've always wanted to do but never dared.

The lesson of Jātaka 57 and 58 is simple: never answer in the place of a rock. If you are a rock, be silent. If you're a monkey, observe. If you're a crocodile... well, learn to keep your eyes open. But you won't be able to do it anyway.

Level 4: The Apex – The Sovereignty of Non-Violence (Twin: Power vs Forgiveness)

The highest level is represented by the Jātaka who concern political power and the renunciation of violence as a supreme act of force.

Scene 50 (Dummedha): The King and the Reverse Holocaust.

The king interrupts the sacrifices of animals with a legal paradox: he proposes to sacrifice only those who have killed. Twinning: Rite vs Ethics. It anticipates modern animal rights philosophies and criticism of institutionalized violence.

JĀTAKA 49–60: THE AXIS OF INTELLIGENCE

From Sacrifice to Strategy

Level 4 – The Apex: The Sovereignty of Non-Violence

Twin: Power vs Forgiveness

Video post blogger

https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/04/jataka-50-dummedha-il-re-e-lolocausto.html

https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/04/jataka-50-dummedha-king-and-inverse.html

https://youtu.be/kQ_HsPFDdVc

Cover

Scene title:

Scene 50 – Dummedha: The King and the Reverse Holocaust

Subtitle:

Like a sovereign, he dismantled the bloody sacrifice without shedding a drop of blood

Keywords:

Ritual vs Ethics – Political Power – Renunciation of Violence – Legal Strategy – Moral Sovereignty

Epigraph (from Jātaka 50):

"I swore to kill a thousand evildoers. But there are so many evildoers that now I have to keep my vote."

— King Brahmadatta (Bodhisatta)

Introduction: The Apex of Sovereignty

In the earlier levels of the Jātaka scale, we have seen wisdom make its way through cunning, patience, personal renunciation. But the fourth and final level – the Apex – addresses the highest question: what does a ruler do when absolute power meets absolute non-violence?

Jātaka 49–60, as a whole, explores the twin theme of Power vs. Forgiveness. While other accounts show kings renouncing the throne or forgiving enemies, Jātaka 50 (Dummedha, "The Fool" or "The Fool's Sacrifice") reverses the perspective: it is not the king who sacrifices himself, but the very idea of sacrifice.

We are faced with an "inverse holocaust": a holocaust that does not burn victims, but burns the violent logic of the ritual. The Bodhisatta King does not fight violence with violence. He dismantles it with a legal paradox. And in doing so, it anticipates by two thousand five hundred years modern animal rights philosophies, the critique of institutionalized violence and the strategies of non-violent resistance based on the reversal of rules.

Chapter 1 – The Context: A City of Blood and Flowers

Benares, the sacred city. But his holiness is stained.

The Jātaka opens with a ruthless diagnosis: the population is dedicated to festivals in honor of the gods. These are not simple offerings of flowers and incense. No. People slaughter "sheep, goats, poultry, pigs and other living creatures". The temples are dripping with blood. Carcasses are considered part of the rite.

The Bodhisatta – here reborn as Prince Brahmadatta, son of the king of the same name – observes this scene with silent horror. But it is not a helpless horror. It is the horror of those who understand that violence is not just an individual act, but a cultural system. People don't kill out of cruelty: they kill because they believe that this is the right way to honor the divine.

And here lies the genius of the future king: he does not attack faith, he attacks the internal logic of the rite.

From a young age, the prince meditated. He knows that when he becomes king he will not simply be able to prohibit sacrifices with an edict. Why? Because a direct ban would generate rebellion. People defend their gods and their habits more fervently than they defend their lives. A prohibition from above would be circumvented, ignored or overturned.

We need a strategy.

Chapter 2 – The Secret Ballot: The Pious Deception

The prince devises a daring plan. Every day, as he leaves the city, he stops in front of a large banyan tree – a sacred tree, home to a revered spirit. And there, in front of everyone, he performs acts of devotion: he offers perfumes, flowers, water, goes around the trunk with reverence.

People watch. The future king worships the tree. He seems like a believer like everyone else.

But it is a staging. The Bodhisatta is building an ethical trap.

When he finally ascends the throne, he convenes the assembly: ministers, brahmans, nobles, people. And he asks, "Do you know how I got the kingdom?"

No one knows how to answer.

Then the king reveals: "Did you see me worshipping that banyan tree? Well, I was making a vow. I promised that if I became king, I would offer a sacrifice to that tree. Now it's time to keep our promise."

The assembly nods. It all seems normal. A pious king who honors his vote. But the king adds: "My vote, however, was specific. I did not promise to sacrifice animals. I promised to sacrifice the wicked."

And he explains: "All those who are given to the five sins – killing creatures, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, intoxicating drinking – and all those who walk the ten paths of injustice, I will kill them. With their flesh and blood, with their bowels and their entrails, I will make my offering."

Silence in the room.

Chapter 3 – The Reverse Holocaust: The Trap That Frees

The king orders the drum to be beaten in the streets of Benares. The proclamation is this:

"Our lord, when he was viceroy, swore that as king he would kill a thousand transgressors of the commandments and sacrifice them to the sacred tree. Therefore, whoever henceforth kills living beings, steals, lies, behaves badly – he will be among the thousand chosen for sacrifice."

And the king pronounces the stanza that gives the title to the Jātaka:

"I swore to kill a thousand evildoers.

And there are so many evildoers,

that now I have to keep my vow."

At first glance, it's terrifying. A king who promises to sacrifice human beings? But the paradox is subtle: the king does not kill anyone. He announces that he will only kill those who transgress. And who, knowing this, will continue to transgress?

No one.

The effect is immediate and total. In all of Benares, not a single subject dares to kill an animal, nor to commit any of the actions that would qualify him as an "evildoer". The terror of becoming a victim of the royal sacrifice converts them to virtue.

But there is a second, deeper level: the king never intended to really kill. His "vote" is a legal fiction. He has built a system in which the threat of human sacrifice – never carried out – makes any sacrifice, animal or human, superfluous.

This is the reverse holocaust: you don't burn victims, you burn the idea that violence can be sacred. The rite is formally respected (the vow is kept), but emptied of any bloody content.

Chapter 4 – Twin Analysis: Power vs Forgiveness

The twin level of this Jātaka is Power vs Forgiveness. Where do we see forgiveness? There is no explicit act of clemency towards an enemy. Yet forgiveness is everywhere: the king forgives his subjects even before they sin. He does not punish them for their old transgressions. He does not do a purge. He does not kill any of the thousand who would theoretically have the right to kill on the basis of his vote.

Absolute political power (the king can do anything) is exercised as the power not to punish. It is a form of negative sovereignty: the true sovereign is not the one who can kill, but the one who can not kill even though he has the right to do so.

And the paradox is that this renunciation of violence works better than violence itself. An army of guards would not have stopped animal sacrifice as much as the fear of becoming the next victim stops them. But be careful: fear is not an end in itself. It is a temporary means. The king knows that, in time, the habit of non-violence will become internalized. And in fact the Jataka concludes: "Throughout the reign of the Bodhisatta, not a man was condemned for transgression."

Forgiveness, here, is structural: the king forgives in advance, making punishment useless.

Chapter 5 – Current Events: From Animal Ritual to Institutionalized Violence

Now, a bridge to our time.

The Jātaka 50 anticipates with surprising precision some of the most advanced contemporary critiques of institutionalized violence.

1. Animal rights philosophy.

Peter Singer, Tom Regan and others have shown that animal sacrifice (and more generally intensive farming) is based on arbitrary discrimination: the species. King Brahmadatta does not say that animals should not be killed because they "have rights". It says: if killing is wrong, then it is wrong for everyone – animals and humans – unless a consistent criterion is found. And the criterion he proposes (kill only those who kill) is the same that underlies legitimate defense and modern criminal justice.

2. Criticism of the death penalty.

The king threatens the death penalty for violators, but never carries it out. It's a thought experiment: if the death penalty were really applied to all criminals, society would come to a standstill. But because it is not, the threat is empty. The Jātaka suggests that true justice is not in punishment, but in prevention through cultural transformation.

3. Non-violent reversal strategies.

Gandhi, who knew the Jātakas well, used similar strategies: turning the rules of power against power itself. The hunger strike, the salt march, non-violent civil disobedience – all "law-abiding" techniques to show its injustice. King Brahmadatta fulfills his vow (he does not break it, he fulfills it) but fulfills it in such a way as to make it impossible to carry out. It is the same logic as Satyagraha.

4. Contemporary ritual violence.

How many acts of violence today are justified as "necessary sacrifices"? Preemptive wars, drones killing "suspected terrorists", sanctions killing entire populations – all forms of secular ritual sacrifice. The Jātaka

asks us: what if we applied the same rule to ourselves? What if only those who killed could be killed? Much of the institutional violence would collapse.

Conclusion: The Sovereignty of Non-Violence

The Jātaka 50, Dummedha, is not a moralistic fairy tale. It is a political treatise in miniature.

His thesis is bold: the highest power is not the one that kills, but the one that makes killing impossible without having to prohibit it. The king does not say "do not kill". It says "I will kill those who kill". And with this paradox, it turns every potential assassin into a potential sacrificed. Selfishness – the fear of one's own death – becomes the lever for ethics.

But there is a further lesson, the most profound. At the end of the reign, the Bodhisatta and his subjects are reborn in the sky of the devas. Not because they have made great sacrifices, but because they have stopped sacrificing. The renunciation of violence is, in itself, the highest religious act.

In our age, where violence is still ritualized in a thousand forms – wars for resources, legalized discrimination, ecological devastation – this ancient tale leaves us with an uncomfortable question:

What "vote" could we overturn today to make violence so risky that it becomes impractical?

Perhaps the answer is not in force, but in a legal paradox. Perhaps the sovereignty of non-violence is not a utopian dream, but a strategy. As King Brahmadatta teaches, sometimes you don't need armies to stop a massacre. All it takes is an intelligence that dares to take seriously the words of those who want blood, and give them back to them as a mirror.

Ironic tale: The King and the Reverse Holocaust

That is: how a tweet from a minister stopped the massacre of clicks

An ironic-realistic tale inspired by the Jātaka 50

Chapter 1 – The Daily Sacrifice

Every morning, at 7:45 am, the Minister of the Economy (let's call him Franco V.) opened the refrigerator and took a steak. He didn't even think about it. It was normal. How to breathe. How to kill a chicken without seeing it.

But one night he had a dream. Or maybe it was sushi indigestion. In the dream, a banyan tree spoke to him in the voice of a Greenpeace activist who died in 2019:

"Franco, you swore that as a minister you would save the planet. Do you remember?

Franco woke up sweating. He did not remember any oath. But the next day, during the Council of Ministers, he had a crazy idea.

Chapter 2 – The Viral Ad

Franco did not forbid anything. He did not tax the meat. He did not ban SUVs. Instead, he posted a tweet:

"As a minister, I will honour my secret ballot: I will sacrifice a thousand Italians guilty of crimes against the environment. With their cars, their steaks and their low-cost flights I will make an offer to the Earth. The names? I'll pick them at random from polluters after today."

The tweet had 2 million likes in an hour. But above all, it had an immediate effect: no one dared to drive a diesel anymore. Supermarkets emptied the vegan departments. People went to work by bicycle in the rain.

A journalist asked, "Minister, is that legal?"

Franco replied: "Did I say 'I will sacrifice'? I wanted to say "I will symbolically fine". But the effect is the same."

Chapter 3 – The Reverse Holocaust of Clicks

The paradox spread. A famous influencer, who made videos while eating hamburgers in a private jet, announced his repentance live:

"I don't want to be the number 473 of sacrifice!" From today I am vegan and I ride a scooter.

People stopped buying plastic bottles not out of love for the environment, but for fear of ending up on the "expendable" list. The minister never had to kill anyone. In fact, he didn't even have to fine anyone.

The logic was simple: if you know that the polluter will be punished with death (or a huge fine), stop polluting. But since everyone stopped, there was never any need to punish.

It is the reverse holocaust: the threat so credible as to make punishment superfluous.

Chapter 4 – The reaction of the powers that be

The fossil fuel lobbies tried to stop him. "It's unconstitutional!" they shouted.

Franco replied: "But I haven't killed anyone yet. And I will never kill, because no one transgresses. What's the problem?"

The judges scratched their heads. In fact, the minister had not committed any crime. He had only announced an intention. And the announcement had worked better than any law.

One philosopher compared it to the "nuclear threat: you don't have to use it, just think others would use it." Franco smiled: "Exactly. But mine is a green threat."

Chapter 5 – The (ironic) morality of our time

Obviously, after six months the fear faded. Someone started driving the SUV again. But many do not. They had gotten into the habit of cycling. And the electric car market exploded.

Franco did not become a hero. It became a meme phenomenon. But emissions plummeted by 18%. The UN invited him to speak. He brought a slide with a picture of the banyan tree and a sentence:

"Sometimes you don't need laws to save the world. All it takes is an absurd threat that no one wants to test."

Then he sat down, turned on his iPhone (recharged with solar panels) and tweeted:

"Next goal: those who talk on the phone hands-free on trains. I will find an adequate sacrifice for them too."

And the whole of Italy, for the first time, hoped that this was only a threat.

Scene 52 (Cūḷajanaka): The Prince and the Ocean.

This Jātaka tells of a castaway who does not lose hope). Twin: Despair vs Active Hope. It is the bridge between cunning (monkeys) and royalty (Ahāsīlava).

The Axis of Intelligence: From Sacrifice to Strategy

Scene 52 – Cūḷajanaka The Prince and the Ocean

Despair vs Active Hope

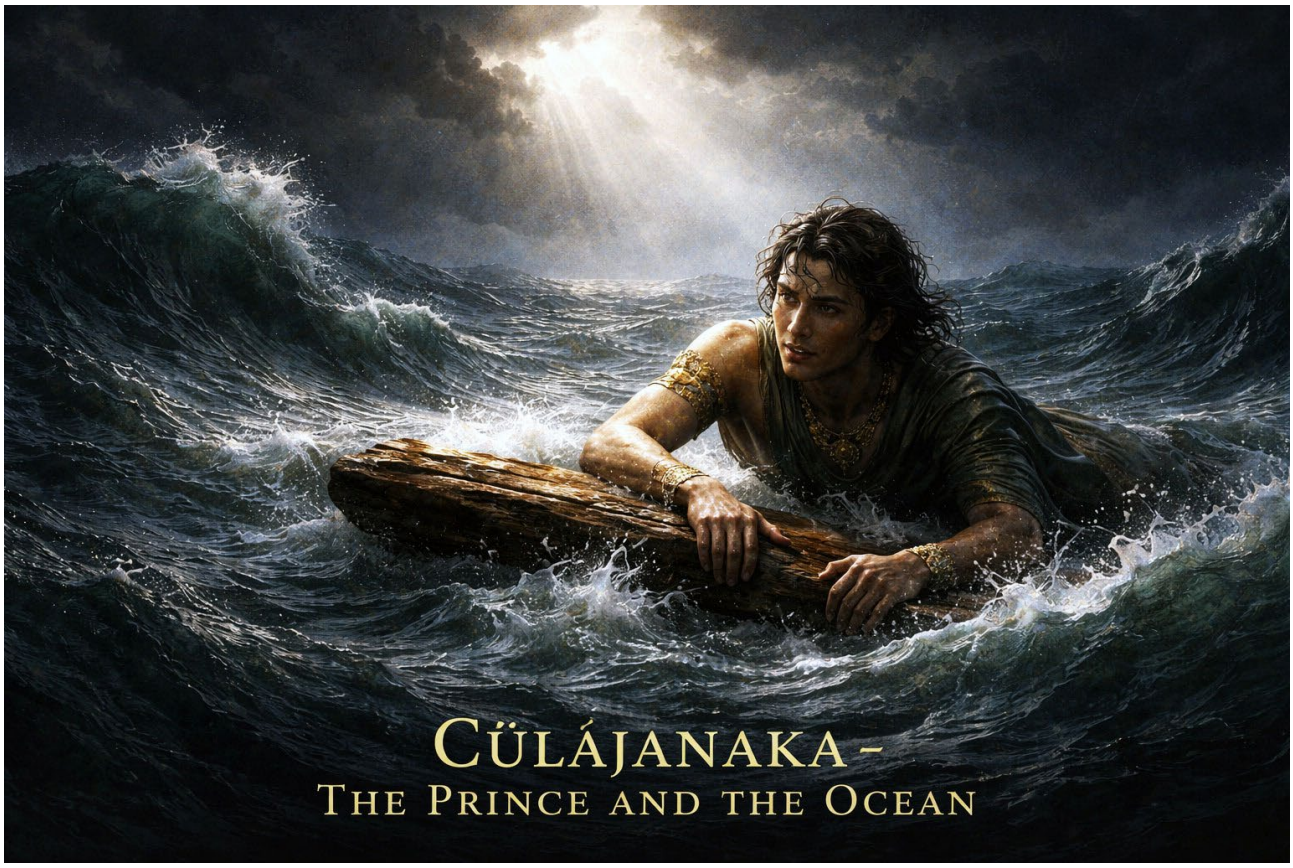
Video post blogger

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/04/52-cula-janaka-jataka-il-principe-e.html

https://giusegugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/04/52-cula-janaka-jataka-prince-and-ocean.html

https://youtu.be/g4HMKtpy7XQ

Cover



Title: The Ocean of the Mind – The Castaway Who Did Not Surrender the Sail

Subtitle: Analysis of the Cūḷa-Janaka-Jātaka between the End of Despair and the Beginning of Sovereignty

Level 4 – The Apex: The Sovereignty of Non-Violence

Twin: Power vs Forgiveness

Epigraph:

"Toil on, my brother; still in hope stand fast;

Faint not, nor tire, though harassed sore.

Myself I see, who, all my woes o'erpast,

Have fought my stubborn way ashore."

— Cūḷa-Janaka-Jātaka (52)

Introduction

In the vast ocean of the Jatakas, where every wave is a life and every current a moral choice, there is a subtle but decisive turning point: the transition from the cunning of the monkey (Jātaka 49–51) to the kingship of forgiveness (Jātaka 53–60). This bridge is not paved with thunderous heroism or bloody sacrifices. It is built with a fragile and very powerful quality: active hope.

The Cūḷa-Janaka-Jātaka ("The Little Janaka of Janaka") is often overlooked in favor of its elder twin, the Mahā-Janaka-Jātaka, who develops its details. Yet, precisely in its essentiality — a king who tells, a castaway who struggles, a verse that becomes again — lies the heart of Level 4. Here it is no longer a question of deceiving the enemy (as in monkeys) nor of passively enduring (as in sacrifices). It is a matter of actively resisting without attacking, of hoping without naivety, of governing without violence.

This analytical account explores Scene 52 as a narrative and philosophical unicum: the exact point at which despair meets its defeat not at the hands of an army, but by the force of a thought that says, "One more stroke of the oar."

Chapter One – The Golden Frame: The King Who Remembers

Under the white canopy of sovereignty, King Janaka sat in silence. It was not an empty silence. It was the silence of those who have crossed the fury of the ocean and now listen to the breath of the kingdom. Around him, the ministers held their breath. A monk, who had returned to secular life due to weakness, had been brought into the presence of the sovereign. Not to be judged. To be healed.

The king spoke. He did not pronounce a sentence. He told a story.

"Brother," he said, "listen to what the ocean taught me when I was alone, without a ship, without oars, without land on the horizon."

And he recited the verse that would become, for centuries, the mantra of castaways and kings:

"Toil on, my brother; still in hope stand fast;

Faint not, nor tire, though harassed sore.

Myself I see, who, all my woes o'erpast,

Have fought my stubborn way ashore."

"It's still struggling, brother. Stand firm in hope. Don't faint, don't get tired, even if you're tormented. I myself see myself that, having overcome all misfortunes, I have fought my obstinate way to the shore."

The frame is essential. The king does not speak as a judge, but as a witness. His authority does not come from the throne, but from the experience of fragility. In this, the Jātaka immediately subverts the traditional image of power: the true ruler is the one who has known despair and transformed it into active hope. Not a warrior, but a survivor.

Chapter Two – The Shipwreck of the Soul

Prince Janaka —young, inexperienced, but not cowardly—had set sail to cross the ocean. Perhaps for trade, perhaps for conquest, perhaps for escape. The Jātaka does not say so. And he is right. Because the cause of the shipwreck is always the same: the illusion of control.

The storm came without warning. The waves rose like mountains of water. The mast broke. The hull opened like ripe fruit. In a few moments, the prince was at sea, clinging to a plank — his only remaining companion.

Around him, only the circular horizon of nothingness. Above, a leaden sky. Below, the abyss that promised oblivion.

Despair did not come as a cry. It came like a whisper. "It's over. There is no shore. There is no salvation. Why continue?"

The prince felt his arms become heavy. The legs go numb. The mind gently suggests, "Let go. It would be that simple."

This is the twin Despair vs Active Hope in its crudest moment. Despair is not the absence of emotion — it is an emotion in its own right, rather a strategy of the mind to reduce pain. Surrendering seems rational. Fighting seems crazy. Yet, it is precisely here that sovereignty is at stake: not in having the power to win, but in having the courage to continue without any guarantee of victory.

Chapter Three – The Voice Inside the Wave

There was no angel. There was no goddess. There was no miracle.

There was, however, a thought.

A thought that did not come from heaven, but from the bowels of the castaway. It was not a complex thought. He was almost stupid in his simplicity: "Another leg shot. One more breath. I don't know if the shore exists. But I know that this movement exists."

The prince began to count. An oar. Two oars. Three oars. Not towards a visible goal. Towards the very act of rowing.

And in that account, the ocean ceased to be an enemy. It became a training camp.

The tradition of commentary (Mahā-Janaka-Jātaka) tells that the prince fought for seven days. It doesn't matter the number. The quality of time matters: no longer a time immediately, but a time generated. Each stroke was a small act of sovereignty. Not on the ocean — on one's own soul.

Here the crucial passage emerges. Active hope is not optimism ("everything will be fine"). It is a practice ("I do this because it is right to do it, regardless of the outcome"). It is the same logic as the bodhisattva: one does not act for the result, but for the virtue of the action itself. Janaka does not hope that the shore will come. He hopes for every stroke of the oar. This is non-violence at the highest level: not giving up the fight, but giving up hatred of what you are fighting.

Chapter Four – The Landing and the Goddess

Finally—when the strength was exhausted, when the mind itself had ceased to hope in the ordinary sense—the meeting happened.

The goddess Manimekhala, guardian of the oceans, saw him. He didn't see him because he was special. He saw him because he kept moving while everything around him was motionless.

It came down from the air, wrapped in a green-green light. "Prince," he said, "why are you still fighting? Don't you see that there is no land?"

Janaka did not answer. He continued to row.

The goddess insisted: "I offer you salvation. Get on my wagon. I'll take you to shore."

Janaka looked up. It was not a look of defiance. It was a look of weariness transformed into clarity. "Goddess," he said, "if I get into your chariot, I shall be saved. But I won't be king. My kingdom is not the earth. My kingdom is this choice not to give up. If you want to save me, save me like this: testify that I fought to the end."

The goddess smiled. She took him by the hand. He brought him to shore.

This episode is brilliant. The goddess offers salvation, but the prince gives up the shortcut. Not out of pride. For consistency. True sovereignty, the Jātaka teaches, is not to govern others — it is not to be governed by one's own fear. And non-violence, here, manifests itself as a refusal to use even divine help as an excuse to stop fighting. The prince accepts salvation, but on his own conditions: that salvation does not annul the struggle, but crowns it.

Chapter Five – From the Castaway to the King

Back on shore, Janaka did not become king because he was noble. He became king because he had learned what no school of politics teaches: that power is not strength, but resilience.

On the throne, he never forgot the wooden plank he had clung to. For this reason, when enemies threatened the kingdom, he did not order massacres. When courtiers asked for executions, he responded with stories. When traitors were caught, he would look at them and say, "I, too, have been at the mercy of the waves. You want to drown me because you're afraid of drowning. Sit down. Listen."

Forgiveness, for Janaka, was not weakness. It was the only answer worthy of those who had learned that the most terrible ocean is the one within oneself.

The twin Power vs Forgiveness finds its balance here. In the ordinary view, power uses violence to punish; forgiveness gives up power to be good. In Jātaka, on the other hand, forgiveness is the highest form of power because it requires a force that violence does not know: the strength not to respond to hatred, not to transform the suffering suffered into inflicted suffering. Janaka rules because he has suffered — not in spite of suffering, but because of the transformation it has wrought in him.

Conclusion – The Axis of Intelligence Today

In 2024, a young climate activist is dragged away by police while blocking a road. In 2023, a mother in Ukraine writes on Telegram: "It's the third day without water, but this morning I planted a seed on the balcony." In 2025, a teacher in a difficult neighborhood of Naples keeps repeating: "One more exercise, one more explanation, I don't know if they will learn, but I explain."

They are all castaways from the Cūḷa-Janaka-Jātaka.

The lesson of the prince and the ocean is very relevant because our era is an ocean of overlapping crises: climatic, war, economic, existential. The temptation to despair has never been stronger. Yet, precisely for this reason, active hope is the only response that is not naïve or cynical.

Being active in hope means:

- Don't wait for salvation to come from above (no goddess will take us away from climate change).

- Don't surrender to the narrative of "it's useless anyway" (like the prince who continues to row without seeing the shore).

- Act not for the immediate result, but for consistency with one's values (every stroke is an act of sovereignty).

And finally, non-violence as the pinnacle of power: in human relationships, in politics, in social conflicts, the choice not to respond to violence with violence is not passivity. It is the recognition that the other is, like us, a castaway who clings to his axis. Forgiveness does not erase the wrong. It transcends it. Like Janaka who, having become king, does not forget the ocean but does not hate it.

The Jātaka 52 leaves us with a powerful image: a king under the white canopy, who does not give orders, but tells a story. He is a hesitant monk who, by listening, finds the strength to return to the path.

The ocean is still there. The axis is still there. The choice, always.

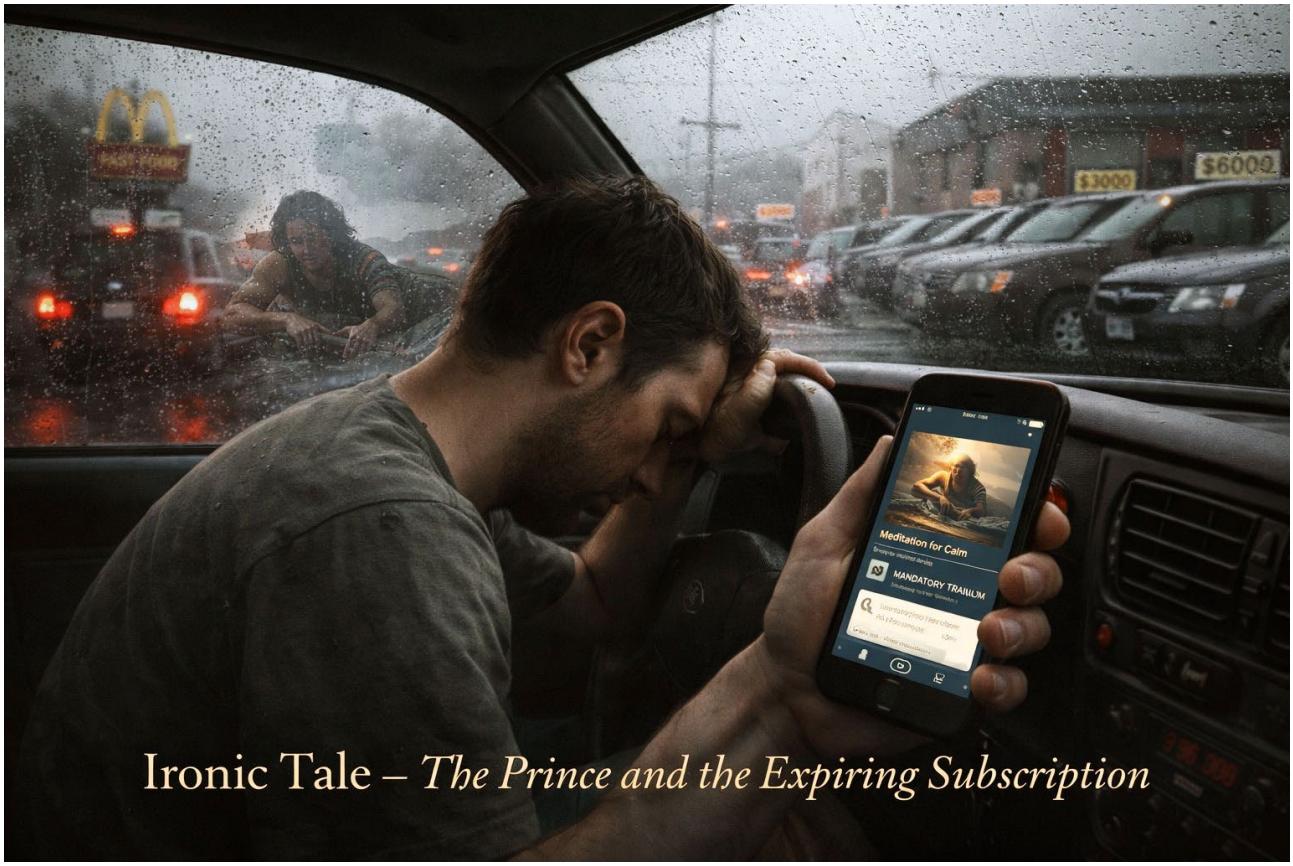
"Toil on, my brother."

Final notes to the text

The Cūḷa-Janaka-Jātaka (Jātaka 52) is presented here in a narrative reworking that respects the structure of the original source (Pali tradition, ed. Fausbøll, 1877) and its commentaries, in particular the Mahā-Janaka-Jātaka (Jātaka 539) which constitutes its expansion. The central verse is quoted in the English translation by E. B. Cowell (1895), adapted into Italian for narrative coherence. The figure of the goddess Manimekhala, although not explicit in the short text of Scene 52, is taken from the commentary tradition as an essential element for understanding the salvific turning point of the story.

Ironic story: The Prince and the Expiring Season Ticket

That is: how a shipwreck of the sixth century BC explains better than any coaching course why you have not yet quit your job



Chapter 1 – The Friday Afternoon Shipwreck

Prince Janaka (first name: Gianluca, thirty-four years old, Netflix subscription expiring) was not crossing the ocean. He was crossing the roundabout in Via delle Industrie at 6:15 p.m., with the 2012 Fiat Panda making a noise similar to that of a sinking motorboat.

The wave was not a wave. It was the boss's email: "Can we have a quick meeting at 6:30 p.m.?"

The shipwreck was not dramatic. It was gray, silent, administrative. Gianluca turned off the engine, rested his forehead on the hot plastic steering wheel and felt the abyss open under him. Not an abyss of salt water,

but an abyss of deadlines, mortgage payments, unheeded voice messages and the realization that his life had become a meeting that could be an email.

"It's over," he whispered. "I give up. I'll be a jumper with elastic bands at country fairs."

Chapter 2 – The Axis of Intelligence (which was then the mobile phone with 3% battery)

Gianluca didn't have a wooden plank. He had a smartphone with a 3% battery. But in that 3% there was still the podcast of a Buddhist monk that he had once downloaded to fall asleep and that was saving his life instead.

"Toil on, my brother," said the monk in a calm voice. «Still in hope stand fast. »

"But I have no hope," Gianluca objected to the dashboard. "I only have a 7 euro meal voucher and a garment that uses 'synergy' as a verb."

The monk (recorded) did not answer. He went on to talk about Prince Janaka, who had rowed for seven days without seeing the shore.

"Seven days?" laughed Gianluca bitterly. "I've been doing this job for seven years. I didn't even see an islet. I only saw the coffee machine that now makes decaffeinated coffee. So, to take away even the last joy."

Chapter 3 – The Goddess Who Is Called HR

At that moment, with divine timing, a message arrived. Not from the goddess Manimekhala, but from Human Resources.

"Hi Gianluca, we have seen that you have not yet done the mandatory course on privacy. Deadline: today. Thank you for your attention."

Gianluca looked at the message. Then he looked at the reflection of the Panda in the window of a used car dealership. Then he looked at the message again.

And he understood.

The goddess did not offer a golden chariot. It offered an opportunity to resign. But he, like the prince, refused the shortcut.

"No," he said on the phone. "I will not click on the course link. Not because he is rebellious. Because I realized that my ocean is not this job. My ocean is the fear of change."

LinkedIn opened. He updated his profile. He wrote: "Available for new opportunities where 'synergy' is only used during corporate pizza dinners."

Chapter 4 – The Landing (which was then the sofa, but a different sofa)

Three months later, Gianluca was sitting on a sofa. Not his old sofa. The new one, in a smaller studio apartment, with a part-time job in an independent bookstore.

He earned half. But he had stopped drowning.

On Saturday morning, while he was preparing coffee with the mocha (not decaffeinated), he received a message from his former boss: "Gianluca, can we talk? The new hire doesn't know how to do pivot tables."

Gianluca read the message. He drank coffee. Then he wrote:

"Of course. My consultation costs 80 euros per hour. And every meeting must begin with the reading of a poem. I choose that of the prince who did not surrender to the ocean."

He never received an answer. And it was the best answer he had ever got.

Ironic (but true) moral:

The ocean is not always an ocean. Sometimes it's a roundabout, an email, a mandatory course. But the choice is always the same: row even when you can't see the shore, or drown in the comfort of not having to decide. Prince Gianluca / Jason has chosen to row. And you? Your phone still has 3% battery. Use it well.

CENTRAL SCENE (COAXIAL) – 51 (Mahāsīlava): The Buried King.

This is the point of convergence of all the previous values.

1. Level 1 (Appearance): He is dethroned because he appears weak (peaceful).

2. Level 2 (Measure): Buried alive, he doesn't cry out, he doesn't waste energy.

3. Level 3 (Mind over Body): In the graveyard, use fear (as in J55) to dominate the jackals and orcs, becoming their judge. He doesn't fight, he referees.

4. Level 4 (Power): Recapture the kingdom by losing the war. His victory is ethical, not military.

Mahāsīlava (("The Great Virtuous"): The Buried King

Sovereignty of Non-Violence – Level 4, Scene 51

Video post blogger

https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/04/mahasilava-il-re-sepolto-la-sovranita.html

https://giuseugliottaapocalisse.blogspot.com/2026/04/mahasilava-buried-king-sovereignty-of.html

https://youtu.be/r6cq4iM4dmc

Cover

Title: The Buried King

Saga: Jātaka 51 – Mahāsīlava

Level: 4 – The Apex – The Sovereignty of Non-Violence

Twin Axis: Power vs Forgiveness

Position in the work: Central Scene (Coaxial) – Point of convergence of all previous values

"Toil on, my brother; still in hope stand fast; Nor let thy courage flag and tire."

Introduction

In the great edifice of Buddhist literature, the Jātakas – the stories of the Bodhisatta's previous lives – are not merely edifying tales. They are maps of consciousness, diagrams of the inner transformations that every human being is called to make. Scene 51, Mahāsīlava ("The Great Virtuoso"), also known as The Buried King, represents the apex of a path that embraces twelve stories (Jātaka 49-60), an "Axis of Intelligence" that leads from sacrifice to strategy, from instinctive reaction to conscious sovereignty.

This Jātaka concludes Level 4: the Apex. Here political power and the renunciation of violence are no longer contradictory, but merge into a supreme act of force: the strength of those who do not need to fight because they have already won within themselves. It is the paradox of the king who loses his kingdom to reconquer it without weapons, of the sovereign who allows himself to be buried alive and transforms the cemetery into a courthouse, of jackals who become judged and of ogres who serve the right man.

This story does not belong only to a remote and legendary past. It speaks directly to our present: to our wars, to our struggles for power, to our obsession with force as the only language of politics. Mahāsīlava reminds us that there is another way – a way that is not weakness but wisdom, it is not escape but transformation.

Chapter One: The Appearance – The King Who Seems Weak

Benares, the city of a thousand golden domes. Under the reign of Brahmadatta, the Bodhisatta is reborn as the crown prince. They call him Silava – "He who is virtuous" – and the name is already a program, already a condemnation in the eyes of those who confuse goodness with impotence.

At sixteen he completed his education. On the death of his father, he ascends the throne as Mahāsīlava, the Great Virtuoso. And he immediately transformed the kingdom into a laboratory of practical compassion: six almoners – one for each city gate, one in the center, one at the palace itself – distributed food to the poor and to travelers. He observes the days of fasting, keeps the precepts, reigns with justice. The love he has for his subjects is that of a father for his child.

This is Level 1 – the Appearance. In the eyes of the world, Mahāsīlava is weak. It does not build weapons, it does not train armies, it does not accumulate treasures for war. He does the one thing a "normal" king would never do: he distributes wealth instead of withholding it, he forgives instead of punishing. His virtue appears as a lack. And those who observe from the outside – those who measure power only in terms of brute force – see him as prey.

But appearances can be deceiving. Because the real weakness is not compassion, it is the inability to understand compassion.

Chapter Two: The Measure – Betrayal and Silence

In the heart of the palace, a minister betrays him. Enter the royal harem – a capital offense in any realm. Mahāsīlava investigates, ascertains guilt, but does not kill. He exiles him: "Take your riches, your wife, your family, and go away. You are not worthy of my kingdom."

The exiled minister crosses the border and offers his services to the king of Kosala. Doesn't it bring with it hatred? Perhaps. But above all he brings valuable information: "Benares is a honeycomb uncontaminated by flies. Its king is weakness personified. A negligible force would be enough to conquer him."

The king of Kosala is cautious. He suspects a trap. Then the traitorous minister proposes a test: he sends men to sack a village beyond the border of Benares. If Mahāsīlava is really weak, he will let them go unpunished.

So it happens. The looters are captured, brought before the king. Mahāsīlava looks at them and asks, "My children, why did you kill my villagers?"

"Because we couldn't live," they answer.

"Then why didn't you come to me?" And he gives them gifts, sends them back.

Level 2 – the Measure. Mahāsīlava does not shout, he does not threaten, he does not waste energy in anger. He has measured the situation and knows that the real battle is not fought on the ground, but in the ability not to react. His silence is not passivity: it is such a radical strategy that the adversary cannot even understand it. The king of Kosala can't believe his own eyes. He sends a second gang, then a third – until his men plunder the very streets of Benares. And each time, Mahāsīlava welcomes them, questions them gently, fills them with gifts and sends them back.

Only then does the king of Kosala understand: it is not weakness. It's another form of strength, one that he doesn't have. And precisely for this reason – paradoxically – he decides to conquer the kingdom. For he who does not understand virtue fears it more than the sword.

Chapter Three: The Mind over the Body – The Cemetery and the Jackals

Mahāsīlava has a thousand warriors – invincible heroes, ready to reduce all India under his scepter. They plead with him: "Let us out, sir. We'll catch him before he sets foot on the border."

'No, my sons,' replies the king. "No one has to suffer because of me. Whoever desires my kingdom, let him take it."

Kosala's army crosses the border, reaches the central region, arrives at the gates of the city. The ministers are still begging. The king still refuses. Finally, the enemy is outside the walls. The message arrives: "Either hand over the kingdom, or fight."

"I don't fight," Mahāsīlava replies. "Take my kingdom."

It opens the gates of the city. He ascends the throne, surrounded by his thousand ministers. Wait.

The king of Kosala enters without finding resistance. The doors of the palace are wide open. There, on the golden throne, sits Mahāsīlava in his peaceful majesty. "Tie them all up," the usurper shouts. "Take them to the cemetery, dig graves, bury them alive up to their necks. The jackals will come at night to give them burial."

Level 3 – the Mind over the Body. In the cemetery, as the earth is piled up around his neck, Mahāsīlava does not feel a single thought of anger. Not a minister dares to disobey him – so perfect is the discipline, the text says. The king exhorts his companions: "Let your hearts be filled only with love and charity, my children."

At midnight, the jackals arrive for the feast of human flesh. At each of their approaches, the king and his companions all shout together, frightening them. The first time the jackals flee. The second they come back.

The third, they understand: these are men condemned to death, they cannot move. They approach without fear.

The head of the jackals aims straight at the king's throat. Mahāsīlava has no free hands to defend himself, he cannot escape. He only has a mouth. And with his mouth – with the same mouth that has only spoken words of forgiveness – he grabs the jackal's throat with a steel grip. The jackal screams, terrified. The pack flees.

But the jackal, in his delirium of escape, digs the earth around the king. Mahāsīlava frees himself, comes out of the pit "like a cloud pushed by the wind". He frees his ministers one by one.

He didn't fight. He refereed. He used fear itself as a tool of liberation. This is the deep meaning of Level 3: mind over body means that even in extreme vulnerability, awareness transforms the situation. The king did not win by force, but with the intelligence of those who know that fear is only an energy to be redirected.

Chapter Four: The Power – The Orcs and the Returned Sword

Now something extraordinary happens. In the cemetery, two orcs (yakkha) fight over the division of a corpse. They cannot agree. They know that Mahāsīlava is righteous – his reputation for righteousness has reached even the ravenous spirits. They drag the corpse to the king's feet: "Lord, divide this man and give us our share."

"Certainly, my friends," replies the king. "But first I have to wash, I'm dirty."

With their magical power, the orcs bring him the scented water prepared for the usurper's bath, royal robes, perfumes, flowers. Mahāsīlava washes, dresses, perfumes herself. Then he asks for food – and the orcs bring him the spiced rice prepared for the enemy king's table. He drinks from the usurper's golden cup. Then he asks, "Bring me the sword of state that lies beside the usurper's pillow."

The sword arrives. Mahāsīlava cuts the corpse into two perfect halves along the spine – an act of precise justice, not violence – and gives one half to each ogre.

Here the definitive reversal takes place. The orcs – ravenous beings, symbol of the chaotic forces of existence – recognize the sovereignty of the righteous king more than men. They serve the one who has been able to arbitrate their dispute. And in doing so, they return to the legitimate king the instruments of power: water, clothing, food, the sword.

Level 4 – Power. Mahāsīlava did not reconquer the kingdom by fighting. He regained it by losing. His victory is ethical, not military. It is the victory of those who have shown that true sovereignty does not lie in the ability to kill, but in the ability to arbitrate, to judge justly, to transform enemies into allies.

The orcs, full and grateful, ask, "What more can we do for you?"

"Take me to the usurper's chamber," the king commands. "And put each of my ministers back into his house."

So it happens.

Chapter Five: Forgiveness – The Apex of Sovereignty

The usurper sleeps on the royal bed, in the state chamber. Mahāsīlava strikes him on the belly with the plate of his sword. The usurper wakes up with a start and sees, by the light of the lamp, the legitimate king standing by the bed, holding his sword, dressed in splendor.

"Sir," he stammers, "it is night. The guard is in place, the doors are barred. How did you get in?"

The king tells everything: the cemetery, the jackals, the orcs, the sword. The usurper's heart melts. "O king, I, who possess human nature, have not recognized your goodness. But it has been recognized by the ferocious and cruel orcs, whose food is flesh and blood. From now on, I will never again plot against such a great virtue as yours."

He swears friendship on the sword, asks for forgiveness, and makes Mahāsīlava lie down on the state bed, while he lies down on a small bed next to him.

At dawn, the usurper summons the entire army. In front of everyone, he exalts Mahāsīlava "as if he were raising the full moon in the sky". He returns the kingdom. And he condemns the traitorous minister who had sown discord.

Mahāsīlava sits again under the white canopy of sovereignty, on the golden throne. And he reflects: "If I had not persevered, I would not enjoy this magnificence, nor would my thousand ministers still be alive. It was by persevering that I recovered the real state I had lost and saved the lives of my ministers. Truly, we must fight tirelessly with fearless hearts, seeing that the fruit of perseverance is so excellent."

And he says the verses that give the title to this story:

"Toil on, my brother; still in hope stand fast;

Nor let thy courage flag and tire.

Myself I see, who, all my woes o'erpast,

Am master of my heart's desire."

This is the final paradox. The king who has lost everything regains everything – not by subtracting, but by giving; not by killing, but by forgiving; not by fighting, but by refereeing. His sovereignty is no longer based on fear of his subjects, but on their free adherence. And the usurper himself becomes his most faithful servant.

Power and Forgiveness, the two poles of the twin axis of this Level 4, have come together again into a higher synthesis. Forgiveness is not weakness: it is the only force that can turn an enemy into an ally. Power is not coercion: it is the ability to be recognized as just even by those who have no reason to be so.

Conclusion: Sovereignty Possible Today

What can Mahāsīlava, the buried and resurrected king, teach us in an era of globalized violence, of asymmetrical wars, of powers that believe themselves eternal and collapse overnight?

Perhaps this: that the true force is not the one that destroys, but the one that transforms. Mahāsīlava does not win because he is stronger – indeed, he is objectively weaker in military terms. He wins because his ethical consistency creates the conditions for which even his enemies recognize the justice of his cause.

In the contemporary world, we witness every day the failure of the logic of force. The superpowers lose wars against infinitely weaker adversaries. Regimes that believe themselves invincible collapse when their citizens stop being afraid. Conflicts are not resolved with weapons, but are frozen, multiplied, rekindled.

Mahāsīlava suggests an alternative: the strategy of non-violence not as resignation, but as a superior form of political intelligence. It means having the courage to "lose" in order to gain what cannot be taken away: moral legitimacy, the ability to referee, recognition even by those who oppose you.

There is no shortage of examples, even in recent history: Gandhi in India, Martin Luther King in the United States, Lech Wałęsa in Poland, Vaclav Havel in Czechoslovakia. None of them had armies. Everyone won – not because they were stronger, but because their strength was of another order.

The scene of Mahāsīlava in the cemetery, with the jackals transforming from predators into instruments of liberation, is a perfect metaphor for our time. We live in a global graveyard – of wars, of injustices, of inequalities. And jackals are everywhere: they are fears that paralyze us, anger that consumes us, hatreds that divide us. But if we learn not to waste energy in reaction, if we cultivate the mind over the body – full awareness even in extreme vulnerability – then even jackals can become allies. Orcs can also serve justice.

The final lesson of the buried king is simple and revolutionary: there is no power without forgiveness, there is no victory without transformation, there is no sovereignty that is not based on the free recognition of others. And perseverance – "toil on, my brother" – is the virtue that holds everything together: not the

perseverance of the warrior who strikes, but that of the wise man who remains firm in his integrity while everything around him collapses.

Mahāsīlava returns to the throne not because he killed the usurper, but because the usurper freely chose to bow before him. This is the only revolution worth making: the one that transforms hearts, not the one that cuts off heads.

And perhaps, in an age in which politics has become a spectacle of violence and lies, we need more than ever buried kings who rise again – not in the palaces, but in the consciences of those who choose every day not to respond to hatred with hatred, war with war, fear with fear.

Because, as the Bodhisatta teaches, the fruit of perseverance is excellent. And the sovereignty of non-violence is not a utopia: it is the only form of power that does not need to be defended with weapons, because it is already firmly in the hearts of those who possess it.

This story was told by the Master in Jetavana, about a monk who had abandoned all serious effort. At the end of the teaching, the backslider monk reached the Arahatship. And the Master identified the birth: "Devadatta was the treacherous minister of those days, the disciples of the Buddha were the thousand ministers, and I myself was the great King Mahāsīlava."

This is how it was handed down.

Ironic story: The Buried Manager

(Or: How I lost everything for excess of kindness and I regained power by pretending nothing happened)

Chapter 1 – The King of Planes Excerpt

Matteo was an anomalous CEO. He never fired on the spot, he did not raise his voice in meetings, he did not make the "wild reorganizations" that the consultants proposed to him as if they were candy. Instead, he listened. Worse: he forgave. When he discovered that his deputy, Giampiero, had improper relations with the accounting department (i.e. he tried it with the intern on Teams), Matteo did not report him. He transferred it with a generous allowance and an embarrassingly flattering letter of reference.

"You're a chicken," the CFO whispered to him before resigning. "In the world of managers you eat or you are eaten. You make the buffet."

Giampiero, the deputy traitor, found a job in a competing startup. And there, every evening, he told the new boss: "Matteo is a weakling. He opened six 'active listening' offices instead of buying weapons – sorry, patents – against enemies. All it takes is a viral tweet and his empire collapses."

Chapter 2 – Burial Live LinkedIn

The head of the startup, a certain Omar who called himself "The Disruptor", decided to test the thesis. He sent a troll to write falsehoods about a project of Matthew's. Matteo replied with a little heart and a "Thanks for the feedback, can we meet for a coffee?" The troll was so confused that he quit his own work.

Omar then moved on to cashing in: he launched a hostile takeover, bought Matteo's debts, and one morning showed up at Matteo's office with a youtuber in tow. "You're out. Your thousand employees? Everyone at

home. On the contrary, go to the basement of the skyscraper, sit in the open spaces without a chair, and wait for the jackals of social media to finish the job."

Matteo did not resist. On the contrary: he himself opened the door to the basement. "Little children," he told his employees, "let us fill our hearts with love and charity. And maybe we connect our cell phones to the power banks, because the live broadcast will be long."

Chapter 3 – The Digital Jackals

By midnight, LinkedIn commentators, business journalists, and "fail" influencers arrived in droves. Ready to feast on the corpse of the company. The first comment: "That's why kindness doesn't pay". The second: "Matteo, an incompetent with the face of a good guy".

But Matteo had a plan. When the main jackal – a certain successful entrepreneur with 200k followers – approached to deal the final blow with a post titled "Lessons from a Failure", Matteo responded with a video. In the video, he was sitting in a broken office chair, smiling and saying, "Hi Luca. You're right. I'm a failure. But, tell me: how did that story of your fund investing in companies then sold off to the Chinese end? Ah, and your former partners say goodbye."

The video went viral. The jackal, caught by the throat in the grip of the facts, deleted the post and closed the comments. The pack fled.

Chapter 4 – The Orcs of Venture Capital

As Matteo came out of the basement (he had found a secondary door that opened onto the cafeteria, where the vending machine still worked), two private equity funds were fighting over the remains of his company. They couldn't agree. So they went to Matteo.

"Lord, you are righteous. You share the cake."

Matteo rubbed his hands. "Gladly. But first... Can I take a shower? I'm dirty."

The funds, with their financial magic, brought him the scented water of a luxury spa, a Zegna suit, and even the lunch prepared for Omar (who in the meantime had been arrested for tax evasion, detail). Then Matteo asked the most important thing: "Bring me the decree appointing the new CEO."

They brought it to him. He signed. Then he cut the company into two equal parts – one for each fund – and kept the role of honorary president with the right of veto for himself.

Epilogue – Forgiveness (with postscript)

That night, Matteo entered Omar's office, who was sleeping in the designer armchair convinced that he was still the boss. He hit him with the plate of an iPad. Omar woke up with a start.

"How did you do it? The guards? The armored doors?"

"The guards are former employees of mine who you left at home. I opened the armored doors with your own fingerprints, collected from the glass you left at the dismissal party."

Omar cried. He swore allegiance. The next morning, in front of everyone, he returned the company to Matteo. The traitor Giampiero was sentenced to work forever in the customer service of a telephone company.

Matteo sat down in front of his computer, opened an email and wrote to his team: "If I hadn't persevered, I would still be in the basement now. Instead, I learned that non-violence is not weakness. It's just much, much slower. But in the end, the trolls die. Patience does not."

And underneath, his old motto: "Toil on, my brother. And remember to put your phone in airplane mode when they bury alive."

Moral: the next time someone tells you that kindness doesn't pay, ask them how many jackals they've turned into lambs.

Commentary in relation to contemporary culture

The choice of these twelve Jātakas as a corpus reveals a structure that dialogues powerfully with contemporaneity for three reasons:

1. From Heroic Violence to Systemic Intelligence: In Western culture, the classical hero is Achilles: physical strength and anger. In Jātaka 49-60, the hero is systemic. Prince Pañcāvudha (J55) has weapons, but wins when they are destroyed. In an era of ecological and political crisis (like ours), these texts suggest that true strength does not lie in the accumulation of tools (weapons, money), but in mental flexibility and the ability to read the context (like the leader who recognizes the poisoned fruit, J54).

2. The Critique of Sacrifice (J50) and Capitalism: Jātaka 50 (Dummedha) is a manifesto against alienated sacrifice. If we transpose it, the king who asks to sacrifice only "those who killed" is a radical critique of financial capitalism and modern warfare, where the sacrifice of the victims (human animals, the environment) is carried out by those who never suffer the consequences. It is an attack on the derealization of violence.

3. The Noise and Fury (J59, J60): The two final Jātakas (Drum and Shell) are perhaps the most current. In an age of obsessive performativity (social media, influencers), the moral that "he who sounds too much attracts thieves" is a lesson in negative wisdom. Contemporary culture rewards excessive exposure; these Jātakas remind us of the strategic value of darkness, moderation and silence to preserve one's integrity.

The essay then develops by showing how these twelve stories are not simple isolated moral fables, but a manual of ethical survival. Starting from the decoding of signs (Level 1), passing through the management of resources (Level 2), arriving at the domain of fear (Level 3), the stories converge in Jātaka 51 (Ahāsīlava), which embodies the Philosopher King: the one who, as Plato suggested, should rule, but who governs here not because he is the strongest, but because he has been able to transform burial (death) into arbitrage and meekness into true sovereignty.

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